

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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SUMMER

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THE ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

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THIRTY YEARS OF SOVIET CINEMA AND THE TRADITION OF RUSSIAN CULTURE

By S. Eisenstein

This article was written in October 1947, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution. Illness prevented its completion, and the article was published from the unfinished MS. in Iskusstvo Kino, 1949, No. 5, after Eisenstein's death.

WHEN speeding in one of our fast vehicles through the streets of Moscow, wandering along its new squares and avenues, or, in the evenings, standing and gazing with feelings of pride and admiration at the newly constructed buildings with their beautiful architectural features, it is hard to imagine what our capital city looked like thirty years ago. It is hard to believe that on the site of the House of the Council of Ministers stood a row of one-storeyed huts, and that between the Manège and the Hotel Moscow I myself, in 1924, passed through some gateways and courtyards worthy of a place in old Tver or Kostroma. And looking down from the roof of the same hotel on the panorama of the Red Square and the Kremlin, one cannot realise that here, at the foot of this ten-storey building, where even during the NEP period poulterers' shops flourished, there used to be, ranged along the walls of the game and poultry market, vendors of sour apples or red bilberries, tubs of salted mushrooms or pickled cucumbers.

Moving along Gorky Street, one can no longer recollect even the outlines of the old Tver district, traces of which only now and then peep bashfully through the arcades of the new buildings, showing the fantastic facades of the old houses which have respectfully stepped aside so as not to obstruct the straight line of the highway running from the Historical Museum to the Byelorussia Station.

As we proceed from the centre to the outskirts the wonder increases. Before the astonished gaze of the old inhabitant there unfolds a view of industrial giants, clubs, and residential districts, which have grown up in place of the former squalid areas huddled around the "Lizina Pond" or the "Kutuzov Cabin". These buildings are the living testimony to Moscow's transformation into a great industrial centre, as though symbolising in its capital the development of the country itself from a backward agrarian land into a great industrial power. Looking at the new factory buildings, one finds it difficult to recall to mind the miserable holes and backyards, the blind alleys and crooked lanes, that formerly occupied their sites.

It would be still more difficult to form a mental picture of the appalling conditions of the cinema, and of film-making generally, at the beginning of the new era inaugurated by the October Socialist Revolution. Today, when the giant Mosfilm has everywhere established splendid pavilions, when studios are buzzing with activity all over Moscow, when the whole country resounds with the fame of the magnificent studios of Leningrad and Kiev, Tbilisi and Sverdlovsk, Tashkent and Baku, Erevan and Stalinabad; and when not only nearby Odessa and Yalta but remote Alma-Ata are proud of their brilliantly equipped film-workshops and studios, which produce pictures based on multinational cine-culture, it is indeed not easy to realise that only thirty years ago the scope of all this mighty and unprecedented development was limited to a couple of pitiful "houses", from which grew the great, independent, unequalled art of the Soviet cinema.

Those were the tiny studios in Zhitnoy Street with their glass walls and purple curtains, somewhat in the style of the old photographic studios, soon to look like a tumbledown, wooden, palisaded suburban villa somewhere in the jungle highway of enthusiasm, where, trembling for their future, they organised themselves into the *Russ Company*, and later into the *Mezhrabprom*. But from the height of activity—if not in the scope of production, at least in situation, for the studio was then on the roof of “Nirenzee House” (formerly the tallest building in Moscow)—they soon sank into oblivion. From *Sonki-Zolotye Ruchki* to *The Strong Man* (based on Pshibyshevsky), from *Uncle Puda* to *Navikh Char* and *Dyevikh Gor*, the little cinemas were feeding the curiosity of the spectators with crime, low farcical “humour”, shabby “decadence” and “modernism” rehearsed in the cheapest “popular” form. This was a pandering to the craving for sensation and thrills on the part of the middle class who formed the bulk of the pre-revolutionary audiences. Under the aegis of the Temperance Society, which was anxiously guarding the masses not so much against vodka as against “dangerous freethinking ideas”, the cinema of those days went also to the working-class districts. But, of course, the subjects then agitating the workers were not flashed before them on the screen. Here flourished pseudo-popular drama, full of falsehood, designed for the sole purpose of keeping the people in ignorance and backwardness, the performances being in the nature of sermons to impress the people with the wisdom of submission and obedience and other “domestic virtues,” so as to divert their thoughts from the questions of social injustice and how best to combat it.

However distant all this may seem to us, the moral and ideal aspect of the cinema of those pre-October days is quite easy to understand. Of course, its younger brother has been greatly enriched and embellished with all the sparkling inventions and glittering technique of the Hollywood “city of wonders”. Looking at or reading about these “creations”, one thinks, with an involuntary shudder, that had there not been an October upheaval our Russian cinema would also have brought to the world screen, not the embodiment of a Communist ideal, the most progressive ideology in the world, but “ideals” in accord with the aesthetic standard of Messrs. Ermoliev, Drankov, and Trofimov, making big profits for their masters Ryabushinsky and Lyanozov by the same recipe whose spiritual poison brings riches to the banks of Wall Street and the financiers of Hollywood.

Isolated attempts at a more serious approach to cinematography were made even in those days. Suffice it to mention only Protazanov, one of the early cinema artists who was particularly sincere and creative in his filming of the October years. In 1916, in defiance of a flood of trash and vulgarity let loose upon the screen, he dramatised *The Queen of Spades*, which represented the only popularly cultural level of the time, thus making the first attempt to bring the Russian classics before a wide public. To the same class belongs his film of the personal and social tragedy of Leo Tolstoy, which, in his lifetime, was banned from the screen by the Tsarist censors. It is, however, understandable that against the vast background of trash and vulgarity these tentative experiments should have been greeted with irony, with an often mistaken and still more often short-sighted underestimation of the cinematographic achievements then possible.

All the more significant is the prophetic estimate of the social importance and possibilities of the cinema made by Lenin as long ago as 1907. Bunch-Bruevich relates in his reminiscences how, in conversation with him and A. A. Bogdanov, Lenin argued that as long as the cinema remained in the hands of unscrupulous speculators it would do more harm than good by corrupting the tastes of the people with pictures of crime and horror. When

the cinema belonged to the people and was under the control of real leaders of social culture, however, it would become one of the most powerful instruments for the education and enlightenment of the masses. But when those prophetic words were spoken the film artists could by no means foresee the profound significance and ideal content, the immense wealth of culture, with which our cinema was to greet the thirtieth anniversary of Soviet power.

Having failed, with almost complete unanimity, to recognise the cinema as one of the most important of contemporary arts, and to see it as a great factor in spiritual progress and in the social education of the masses, the Russian pre-Revolutionary bourgeois critics merely echoed what the bourgeoisie of the West wrote and thought, until the first Soviet films burst among them with a bomb-like explosion. The manifestation in those films of a new concept of cinematography, springing from the new Soviet world-concept, forced its way, as did the Soviet achievements themselves, into that sphere of human activity which had hitherto refused to treat the cinema on a basis of equality with the other arts, let alone regard it as wonderfully progressive and of the highest importance. Soviet pictures, having broken the *cordon sanitaire* isolation of our country, brought to the astonished Western world a first glimpse of our country's spiritual power, greatness, heroism, nobility and lofty moral aspect, forged in the fires of the October Revolution.

Frightened out of their wits by those creations, burning with conviction, hastening the coming of a new Socialist era in the history of mankind, and calling upon the oppressed to throw off the age-old yoke of exploitation, the bourgeois powers-that-be hastened to put up a censorship-barrier against us. But the peoples of the world greeted the message of these films with enthusiasm. True pictures of the actual revolutionary happenings in the Soviet Union broke down the barrage of poisonous lies and slanders with which the terrified enemies of progress wanted, and still want (and how they want it!), to stifle in their people the natural desire for friendship and understanding with the peoples of the Soviet Union. From their first appearance in the West, our films did not fail to make a favourable impression on the Western intelligentsia, with the result that the more advanced and democratic sections resolutely turned towards the USSR and established friendly relations and active co-operation with its great and progressive people. With the assistance of this progressive intelligentsia, particularly under pressure from the organised movement in the countries by which the Soviet Union was not yet diplomatically recognised, our films played the part of standard-bearers of our country's ideals, enlisting friends for it everywhere, opening people's eyes to its true appearance, and mobilising public opinion for joint action in the struggle for social justice.

Thus, from the very outset, our films served as megaphones through which the will and spirit of our people, the wisdom and foresight of our leaders, spoke to the peoples of the world, enlightened them, mobilised them. Hence the fear and hatred with which the capitalist ruling-classes regard our cinema productions, as is evident from the frantic efforts during the last decade of the censors everywhere in trying to prevent our films from appearing on the world-screen. Is it not a fact that *The Rainbow*, by Wassilewska and Donskoi, is now forbidden by McArthur to be shown in Japan? This is the film seen by the late President Roosevelt, who recognised in it the rising anger of the people, just as in 1939 he had demanded, to the surprise of the American press, that *Alexander Nevsky* should be brought to the White House, having seen in that, too, the inevitable doom and destruction of the German aggressors as foreshadowed in the crushing of the "iron swine" by the powerful and serried ranks of the Russian people in the 13th century.

And so it has been from the very beginning! Hence the questions and violent attacks by the reactionary wing in the British Parliament in connection with the permission given to the Soviet producer, Pudovkin, to stay in England. Hence also the inquiry in 1926 by the reactionary Reichstag into the under-estimation of the power of the Soviet Fleet, a power suddenly revealed to them by *The Battleship Potemkin*, which was three times banned and three times broke the fetters of the German censorship.

Examples of the type of film calculated to exercise a powerful influence in uniting the people in the struggle for friendship and understanding will be found in the *Maxim* trilogy, in the stern character of *The Great Citizen*, in the classic films *Lenin in October* and *Lenin in 1918*, in the immense epic *The Vow*, or the absorbingly interesting *Chapayev* and *Schors*—films which successfully demonstrated and insistently demanded the recognition of cinematography as a genuinely great art. Soviet life has brought to the cinema real culture, in respect not only of ideas and subjects, but also of method; not only in practice, but also in theory; not only in producing valuable work of educational interest, but in constantly striving to discover scientific principles in cinematography, that art of arts. By applying the methods of Marxism-Leninism, our film specialists have endeavoured to penetrate deeper and deeper into the essence of their art, and so have set the first landmarks of cine-poetics and cine-aesthetics. Thus, in pursuance of their own creative achievements, many Soviet film artists have built up a system of theoretical principles on the art of the cinema. The result of this practice was that by the end of the nineteen-twenties the ideal of Belinsky, who had visualised his motherland as the world's leader in education, establishing principles in science and in art and receiving the reverential homage of respect from the whole of enlightened mankind, had already been realised in the sphere of the cinema.

No wonder, therefore, that in our country, and in our country alone, as part of the celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the city of Moscow and the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR has established within its precincts a Department for the study of the art and science of cinematography. By that tribute the cinema has been conclusively recognised as an important cultural phenomenon; and it is well to remember that it is the achievements of Soviet film-making that have earned it this recognition! We are growing accustomed to seeing our productions yearly crowned with laurels at international festivals. Venice in 1947. Venice and Cannes in 1946. Moscow in 1935. Venice in 1934. On the third day the award goes to *Chapayev*, the day before it was to *The Stone Flower*; the prize for the best achievement in film production is carried off by Alexander Romm (*Girl No. 217*), and B. Chirskov, writer of *The Turning Point*, is judged one of the greatest of scenarists. Today we accept such tributes as rightly due to us, and we are only interested in the questions: How many first places? How many altogether—seven or eight? Who's at the head of the list? These films having received much higher praise by virtue of Stalin prizes, we have ceased to wonder at the world's recognition of our productions.

This recognition accorded to our film artists dates from the earliest days of the Soviet cinema. Indeed, are there not, packed away somewhere among our personal archives, a diploma and a medal from the Paris 1925 exhibition, a large gold medal for my *The Strike*, a silver medal for a film by D. Vertov in 1924, and many other such? And that happened in the still early years, when on the site of the present Mosfilm studios along the Lenin Hills there was only the vast storm-swept and weed-covered expanse of Potilikha! At that time Soviet power had only just freed the film industry from private hands and placed it under State control. The years of collapse

stared in at the broken snow-covered windows of the studios. Ugly, deformed survivals of private enterprise took advantage of the NEP years and crawled back into their favourite niches, if not as masters or as saboteurs of production, at least as saboteurs in the field of ideas, carrying and trying to infect others with the banalities of the dead past.

The new film-specialists did not bring to the cinema a new tradition, but a new artistic approach, an intense hatred of what was stale and discarded, an irreconcilable hostility to trash and sensationalism, a firm determination to keep out of the cinema the old and outworn practices entirely unsuited to the expression of the new thoughts, new ideas, new feelings and new words of a new era. Where did the Soviet cinema, in the first years of its existence, find such power, such unparalleled strength, such a unique medium of expression that, having only just emerged from wretched hovels unworthy of the name of studios, it was nevertheless able to counterpoise to the bourgeois film world of Europe and America such a wealth of new film creations and cinematographic conceptions? What was the secret of this miracle? An unprecedented upsurge of great ideas, an unparalleled influx of fresh tasks, an enormous number of new demands and requirements in the course of rebuilding on Socialist lines one-sixth of the inhabited globe: that is what lay at the foundation of our cinema and was from the very outset the cause of its greatness and originality. To shape it into an instrument of expression capable of helping to solve countless difficult problems, it was necessary to penetrate into the very essence of the art of the cinema, and to develop it to the utmost extent possible.

In order to carry out those great tasks, we have also developed a highly original and unrivalled style of pictures which, like the philosophy they represent, bear no resemblance to any previous films, any more than any former governments resembled either in form or content the Soviet Socialist State. It was inevitable that our cinema should reflect, both in form and content, all that is great and original in the new system of our country.

Does it then follow, because of its previous "non-existence", that our unequalled cinema sprang like Minerva from the head of some young film expert? As I have said, when the young artists and producers, burning with irreconcilable hatred towards everything old and bourgeois, entered the arena and engaged in single combat with those who wanted to continue on the same lines as the class the October Revolution had swept aside, they found before them no other models than those they would have nothing to do with. Does this then mean that apart from being inspired with new ideas craving to be represented on the screen they were devoid of any cultural tradition? Cinematographically speaking, yes. But they were richly endowed with other great cultural traditions, the traditions of Russian national culture, and the cultures of the sister nations united with us in the great Union of Soviet Republics. From the age-old traditions of Russian culture have grown and developed those general principles and influential tendencies which, in our day, have become so organically a part of the cinema and are so well integrated with and so richly and variously expressed by it.

Being heir to all that is best in the creations of different periods, our epoch, while evolving its own technique of cine-culture, does not, of course, turn away from what is great and valuable in the culture of the past. Be it the tragedies of Shakespeare, the satires of Swift, or the delineation of a character or an epoch in the masterpieces of Balzac; be it the sensuous, many-coloured art of the East, be it the art of Cervantes or Homer, Rembrandt or Michelangelo—all, at the right moment, serve the artist who strives to achieve distinction for the Soviet cinema. All these, and other great masters, come to our aid at some time or other to help us solve what-

ever difficult problem of drama, art, music or character we may come up against in the course of production.

Naturally, it was inevitable that we should first of all draw upon the inexhaustible riches of our Russian cultural heritage, because its traditions and specific qualities are bred in our bones. It was those very traditions that guided the producers of the twenties and thirties, who were called upon by the Revolution to storm the strongholds of the past and to create works having real value and being in accord with the future foreseen. As for the world's masterpieces, we have not infrequently been conscious of their influence when dealing with the great diversity of our Russian culture. Thus, for instance, we came in contact with Swift and Voltaire through the genius of Saltykov-Shchedrin; with Dickens through the fantastic creations of Gogol; with Byron via Lermontov.

What are the essential features in the culture of our motherland that are so clearly depicted in the Soviet cinema? First, of course, must be mentioned the fact that our democratic culture has always invariably marched under the banner of idealism and "enlightenment", as it used to be called. It would be difficult to find anywhere else in the world a culture so inspired with, and so consistently pursuing, from its very beginnings, the ideal of the public good, and always striving, whether with painter's brush or with engraving tool, with the spoken word or with musical composition, to carry thought forward, to contend for the ideal, not to entertain or be entertained, but to serve the people: to serve the people with whatever at the particular period was considered most necessary for the improvement of their conditions and for general progress. Only certain decadent streaks in Russian art and literature during the pre-October period show a departure from this tradition. That happened in the case of some isolated groups and societies who, having betrayed the revolutionary-democratic traditions of the best elements among Russian intellectuals, drifted inevitably into the fold of objectless aestheticism devoid of any purpose or ideals. Nor was there even anything original in this peculiar phenomenon. It arrived from the West, lifeless, anaemic, with a, to us, very strange tendency to "art for art's sake".

The characteristics of the real tradition of Russian art and literature are quite different. Let us have a look at the ancient monument, our national pride, *The Tale of the Host of Igor*. Is this merely a sad legend about a Russian prince taken captive by the enemies of his country? Is it only an occasion for a lyrical effusion about his immortal lament for Yaroslavl in far-away Putilovo? Or perhaps the anonymous author only aimed at impressing his audience with wonderful pictures of Igor's campaigns, so as to add deeds of heroism to his ordinary descriptions of nature? No: no: and again no. As already pointed out by Karl Marx, when writing on this work of the Russian popular genius, the idea of the poem was to call upon the Russian princes to unite, as they had done once before against the Mongol invaders. And the "golden word" of Svyatoslav calling on the Russian princes to unite "in defence of our Motherland" rings out with undiminished passion to this day. Thrice the tale is interrupted by a lyrical refrain directing attention to this high purpose, a purpose which pervades the whole poem, and is its chief beauty.

Thus, for twelve hundred years we have heard a passionate political appeal presented to us in the form of brilliantly sublime poetry. Has it not been so with all our literature: moral and political appeals couched in poetic forms, passionate "golden words" addressed to us in images of great artistic worth? Linking the pre-revolutionary with the October period are the two giants Gorky and Mayakovsky, whose "message" is already in line with the highest idealism, the most progressively political, the most consistently Bolshevik-revolutionary. Thus the slogans of our Soviet literature

proclaim the same message, more clearly and directly expressed, as that borne by our culture down the ages. When we come to consider the origin and development of the Soviet cinema, we see in it the same features: unrestricted service and passionate devotion to the new ideas.

It is to this staunch adherence to the principles of the Revolution that we attribute the rise and development of the Soviet cinema with its great poetic riches, which it could never have acquired in the cramped atmosphere of the West. The unvarying presence of ideals running like an unbroken thread through our earlier Russian culture (in painting, sculpture, music and architecture as well as in literature, with which we are here chiefly concerned) was to be seen in the Soviet cinema also, from its very beginnings. The staying-power of this idealistic continuity is the motif of our people's national consciousness. From the early tales of pathos and the "golden word" of Svyatoslav to the passionate lines on "the national pride of the Great Russians"; from *Dead Souls* and *War and Peace* to Gorky's epics, to *The Iron Flood*, *The Quiet Don*, and *Walking Sorrow*, this great idea permeates the whole. That is why our traditional epics, where the people's yearning to identify themselves with the vast spaces of their motherland finds full expression, are dearer to us than any other form of literature. It is characteristic that our first films were also built on an epic scale such as no other country attempted: we may cite the epics dealing with the first Revolution (*The Battleship Potemkin*, *Mother*, the *Maxim* trilogy); with the history of the civil war (*Chapayev*, *Schors*, *We from Kronstadt*); with the distant past (*Alexander Nevsky*, *Ivan the Terrible*, *Minin and Pozharsky*); with times nearer to us (*Peter The Great*, *Suvorov*, *Kutuzov*); films depicting the most critical stages in the long revolutionary struggle (*Lenin in October*, *Lenin in 1918*, *Man with a Gun*, *Great Citizen*); and finally those dealing with the history of the latest period, beginning with *The Vow*, and continuing with the epics about the Patriotic War, such as *The Young Guard*, *The Battle of Stalingrad*, and *The Third Blow*. And is not this idea of greatness and heroism, of national consciousness and multi-national unity, in our country and government, the same as that which breathes in the classics of the past, and thus unites them with the classics of the present and the future?

The Russian classics have similarly had a fruitful and salutary influence on our cinema in respect of particular artistic problems. I could write a whole treatise on Pushkin alone, that great master of words and imagery, in connection with his influence on plastic design in cine-culture. Of no less importance to the cinema, particularly in respect of original optical effects, have been the picturesque, colourful, and essentially cinematic descriptions in the works of Gogol. In Tolstoy we find an inexhaustible mine of the thoughts and feelings of a man guilty of having committed a criminal action. Makers of historical films cannot overlook the painter Surikov. Nor can those concerned with psychological pictures disregard Repin, any more than the student of characterisation in cine-portraiture can ignore Serov. The tradition of the great genius Mussorgsky is invaluable for guidance on the subject of dramatic film music. The study of Mayakovsky's rhythmically woven lines will enrich many a generation of film artists. Gorky is a veritable academy of realistic masterpieces of life and characters.

We must, however, refrain from dilating in detail, in order to illustrate the important role played by Russian culture in the technical and stylistic development of our incomparable Soviet cinema, on matters which would require volumes of study. Suffice it to say that in the course of its thirty years existence Soviet cinematography has maintained and still continues the same great cultural tradition, the unity that has been its chief inspiration from the earliest times to our glorious present.

Translated by S. DAVIS
(Slightly abridged)

KATAYEV'S NEW NOVEL

By M. Bubennov

Abridged from a review-article published in PRAVDA on January 16 and 17, 1950. The novel reviewed is Valentin Katayev's ZA VLAST SOVETOV (FOR THE POWER OF THE SOVIETS), 1949.

THE work of the talented writer Valentin Katayev is well known to and loved by Soviet readers: *Lone White Sail*, *Son of the Working People*, *Forward, oh Time!*, *Came a Soldier from the Front* and *Son of the Regiment* have all made a great contribution to Soviet literature.

Recently his new full-length novel, *For the Power of the Soviets*, appeared and aroused the interest to be expected with any work of his. It was his aim to paint a broad picture of the Soviet people's heroic struggle against the hated enemy in Odessa during the Great Patriotic War. The theme he had set himself was a great and noble and inspiring one. There are quite a number of books describing the life and work of Communists and Soviet patriots underground. Almost without exception, however, they are rather in the nature of memoirs and lack *artistic* formulation, a task which Katayev set himself.

[Bubennov then recalls how thousands of Soviet people went to live underground in the Odessa catacombs, how they fought the German and Rumanian occupation authorities, and their many successes against them.]

Valentin Katayev took his work seriously and worked on his novel for several years. He collected a vast amount of material on the Odessa underground movement, talked with members of the resistance and visited the catacombs. This resulted in his gaining a good *general** conception of a longish period of struggle, and in his novel he gives many true and enthralling pictures of this struggle. Where he deals with actions carried out by the underground, the book is most interesting. His descriptions of the spiritual world of Soviet people of different generations are well drawn—for example when the underground learns of the defeat of the Germans at Moscow or where three underground workers, condemned to death, are taken through the spring streets of Odessa.

Unfortunately, however, it must be noted that the novel suffers from some fundamental shortcomings. Although he collected a vast mass of material, Katayev failed to make a thorough study of this material or to "soak" himself in it, and proved incapable of giving it artistic form, thus failing to depict profound and great historical truths. Much in the novel gives the impression of invention and falsity, and is lacking in reality. What precisely are these shortcomings?

Thousands participated in the struggle. It was therefore the writer's task to create outstanding and unforgettable *typical* characters, and I do not think we can doubt that Valentin Katayev had this in mind when writing his book. "The characters in this novel are fictitious," Katayev wrote in his foreword. "The readers," he continued, "will, nevertheless, find in them traits of character of the real Odessa underground workers . . ." The main heroes of the novel are Bolsheviks. It was to be expected that he should, in an all-round characterisation, depict the heroes of our time. Unfortunately, Katayev's Odessa Bolsheviks are highly unrealistic, most unlike the

* These and all subsequent italics, other than book titles, are M. Bubennov's.

Bolsheviks who won undying glory in the struggle against the enemy during the harsh years of occupation.

The central figure in the novel is Gavrik Chernoiivanenko, first secretary of the Prigorodny district of Odessa. Soviet readers know this character from that excellent book *Lone White Sail*. A number of other characters from the same story also appear in the new novel. It seems clear that Katayev wanted to show the long road traversed by our people since the first revolution, and how these people of ours have matured spiritually during the years of Soviet power.

We well knew the poor youth Gavrik, who wandered the streets of Odessa in search of a crust of bread. He was illiterate, and was twelve years old before he learnt that 9.30 was the same thing as half-past nine. Thirty-five years have passed. There has been a world war, the October Revolution, the Stalin five-year plans. The Communist Chernoiivanenko has always been in the thick of things, in the forefront of the struggle for Socialism. But how does Katayev describe Chernoiivanenko, the veteran Party worker, the leader of the Odessa underground? Why, for example, does Katayev call him "Gavrik" throughout the novel? Katayev says that Chernoiivanenko had been underground so often that "the diminutive of his name, 'Gavrik', had become his permanent nickname, and no one in the town ever called him anything else but Comrade Gavrik, and sometimes just Gavrik. A trifle difficult to believe! "The epoch of nicknames," as Katayev himself writes, "has long since gone", and it is extremely difficult to believe that people in the town would address as Gavrik an elderly, honoured man, a leading Party worker, especially as such a diminutive may sound odd when used of an adult.

It should be further noted that Katayev spared no pains to paint Comrade Chernoiivanenko's external appearance in the most disparaging colours. A picture of him emerges on many pages of the novel. Katayev writes: "He was a wizened, elderly, grumpy little man with a revolver in a worn holster, worn over a light overcoat." Chernoiivanenko has a "mottled snub nose which he wrinkles up on the slightest provocation", sometimes "concertinewise". He has "squinting, ill-matched, goat's eyes"; "his brow is furrowed and lined". He "grumbles, spits and groans"; he often "shouts, speaks rudely in a high-pitched cockerel tone of voice", or in a "shrill, droning voice with a wearisome, pedantic intonation". And should he sing, it is "in an uncertain and tuneless little bass". Chernoiivanenko walks "with a rolling Black Sea gait, often making awkward movements, as though pulling up his trousers". Did Katayev have to draw Chernoiivanenko like this?

But this is not all. The impression he creates when he opens his mouth is very odd. Neither long years of intercourse with people all over the country, nor work in the Party, nor serious study (which he must have had to do) had, Katayev asserts, been able to change his mode of speech. What is more, Gavrik's language in *Lone White Sail* is much better and purer than in this novel. Katayev assures us that Chernoiivanenko speaks "real Black Sea language". What language is that? Chernoiivanenko often exclaims: "You don't say!" "And how!" "Ha!" "So what!" "See here!" The word "theme", he pronounces "feme", the words "you're joking", "yer choking". His favourite word is "lyric". It had "stuck to him" since the Civil War. In this word, Katayev informs us, Chernoiivanenko has, for some reason, "embodied a multitude of the most varied nuances of a critical nature". Here, for example, is his conversation with Raissa Lvovna, the wife of his friend, when she does not want her husband to work underground. "None of your lyricism," he shouted fiercely, "see here: everything's O.K.!"

One of the heroes of the novel, Druzhinin, meeting Chenoivanenko, says to him in a sharp exchange, "Come off it, can't you?" Katayev then remarks

that Chernoiivanenko did not like this expression, which he found to be "rather cheap and even spiv-like, alien to the language of a Soviet man". True: but that is precisely the way Chernoiivanenko himself talks! The author had forgotten that a little earlier in the book, the following scene occurs: "Gavrik frowned. His face became harsh, almost cruel. 'See here, Marchenko,' he said, turning to face Svyatoslav. 'Come off it, can't you? I was a soldier when your father was probably still at the breast. Get me? Now, how about it?' Gavrik lightly pushed Svyatoslav and climbed in. 'You'll rupture yourself!' shouted Svyatoslav desperately. 'So what?'"

Katayev writes that when Chernoiivanenko talks to people he considers his own he "turns to the South Russian dockside street language of his childhood". But throughout the whole novel Chernoiivanenko is talking in the main with his own people, the people close to him, who surround him in the catacombs. It should be added that it is not only to his own people that he speaks in this "pure Black Sea language". Here, for instance, is the first time he meets the commander of the last unit to leave Odessa. "The major, having eyed Gavrik with his revolver strapped over his beaver-cloth coat, said: 'Pardon me, but can you read a map?'"

"Gavrik's eyes flashed. 'Wotcher think?' he muttered, and putting his elbows on the table, he got a stump of pencil out of a side pocket. 'Give us the gen.'" Such is Chernoiivanenko's external form.

Perhaps he has a fine character? Nothing of the sort! V. Katayev says that Gavrik Chernoiivanenko "did not love many people" and that he had "a carking temper". He had not even built up a family, although the author does not explain why. "All kinds of family feelings and personal tenderness are entirely alien to his spiritual make-up," writes Katayev, "his feelings were always tightly locked up inside him." Gavrik Chernoiivanenko never could make out how it was that his friend Piotr Vasilievich Bacheya, also a man of honourable age, had a son. "Petka's son! In Gavrik's understanding", writes Katayev, "this was an entirely abstract idea, almost impossible and even comic." We readily recall how much little Gavrik loved his grandfather, his uncle, his aunt and her family. We recall how he, when poor and hungry, treasured the cock on a stick given him by his grandfather and then gave it as a present to Motya's niece. What, then, has happened to that kind and affectionate Gavrik? Why has he become what he is today in Katayev's portrayal?

To sum up: Katayev describes how Comrade Chernoiivanenko, this very unpleasant person, was placed at the head of the Odessa underground movement. One can only fall back on the assumption that, for all his many shortcomings, he was a good Party organiser, an irreplaceable underground worker and a first-rate conspirator. But even this is not so. Katayev writes that Gavrik Chernoiivanenko had been an underground worker several times in his life—in Tsarist days, during the Wars of Intervention, in the days of Denikin and Wrangel, in 1918 when the Austrians were in occupation, and under the rule of the Hetmans Skoropadsky and Petlyura. . . . Years of life and struggle underground: what tremendous experience Chernoiivanenko should have! Such a man would indeed be irreplaceable in the organisation of underground struggle against the invaders. But let us look and see how this experienced conspirator and underground worker, the best in Odessa, organised work in his own home town.

Katayev asserts that Chernoiivanenko clearly understood that "this underground work would be the most difficult". He did not doubt that it would be necessary "to hold out for at least six months and perhaps a whole year". And he therefore began "to prepare for going underground before the fate of the city had been finally decided". How did he prepare? First he looked for a secret entrance to the catacombs in an area familiar to him from

childhood. "Here," Katayev asserts, "a safe place was found from which the underground district committee could function." Was this so? When the hour had struck and Gavrik turned up in this "safe spot" with his people, whom did he find there . . . the H.Q. of our own military unit! People from a retreating unit, unfamiliar with Odessa, had not the slightest difficulty in finding the "secret" entrance into the catacombs. What a conspirator!

The second important task that occupied Chernoiivanenko before going underground was the preparation of a food base for the District Committee and detachment. He knew he "needed a year's supplies" and he had taken into account that his detachment would grow constantly. Therefore, and as was actually done in many cases, large stocks of all kinds had to be laid in. Was it possible to do this? It was. We do not doubt that it was in fact done by the Odessa Bolsheviks when they organised their underground. How does Katayev describe this? "The preparation of foodstuffs, arms and ammunition, despite the fact that Gavrik had all the necessary documents, papers and so forth to hand," writes Katayev, "at once became about the most complicated task Gavrik had to accomplish." Katayev writes that "he found himself in the position of a *beggar* who came up against a veritable wall of obstacles. Anything he asked for was given him in insufficient quantity. He asked for material for a year and got three months' supply. Every one of his demands was mercilessly cut."

Though Katayev did not intend it, this sounds like slander against the Odessa Party leaders who organised the underground before the abandonment of the town. As anyone will understand, authority for the distribution of provisions for Chernoiivanenko's detachment could only have come from the Odessa Regional Party Committee or similar responsible persons. There were enough provisions in the city and it is most unlikely that the organisations dealing with the establishment of an underground organisation would have issued such provisions in short quantity. But let us assume that someone in the Odessa Regional Committee made a mistake and issued goods "in short quantity". Let us assume that the lower departmental workers, since they could not know what Chernoiivanenko needed the goods for, looked on his demands with suspicion, since they were used to taking care of the people's property. What should have been the attitude of an old communist like Chernoiivanenko, who would understand better than others that a prolonged struggle was coming? Naturally to fight as hard as possible to achieve the creation of a foodstuff base of the necessary size. Did he do this? No. "You just had to grit your teeth and put up with it", writes Katayev.

What did Chernoiivanenko succeed in doing? He was unable to create his base in the catacombs in good time. He arrived at the catacombs a few minutes before our units retreated. He brought all the food and equipment stocks of the District Committee and the detachment. It turns out that *two trucks* were enough to bring everything!

It soon turned out that Gavrik, though he had been preparing to go underground for a long time, had forgotten a good many things. No sooner had they started life in the catacombs than he discovered that there were no pricklers to clean out the primus stoves with. Well, what of it? A trifle easily overlooked. But how could Gavrik, veteran revolutionary and underground worker, in preparing for a long armed struggle, forget first-aid and medicines? How could he, in almost twelve months' preparation for living in the gloom of the catacombs, lay in only one barrel of fuel for lighting purposes? (Elsewhere we are told that all he had was 22 litres!) And why did he have, instead of the said much-needed goods, a vast stock of pencils? Within a few months, we learn from the novel, the District Committee had no food

supplies. Could a leading underground worker with many years' experience have acted so irresponsibly in preparing to go underground? How was it that the Odessa Regional Committee, which entrusted Chernoiivanenko with these preparations, kept no sort of check on his work?

The third important task was the preparation of a base for underground agitational work. What had Chernoiivanenko done about this? Nothing—except for a “vast stock” of pencils. It soon became evident that the underground District Committee had no good radio-set, no paper, no printing-press and even no typewriter ribbons. Chernoiivanenko had done one thing only: he had prepared leaflets and had them printed by the Regional Committee's printing-press, that is, in the printing-shops of the Regional Committee's newspaper. “While Soviet power still ruled in the city,” writes Katayev, “tightly packed bundles of pale pink leaflets were already crated: appeals and proclamations, prepared for the future underground District Committee.” What did Chernoiivanenko write in his leaflets? Here is the first one, which Katayev cites with obvious pleasure in his novel: “Comrades, collective farmers, and individual peasants! All honest Soviet people! That spawn of mankind, the bloodthirsty cannibal Hitler, and his bandit followers, have attacked our sacred homeland. . . . *He has seized our native city of Odessa and the entire Odessa Region.*” Our troops were still fighting for Odessa and no one knew or could know how long the fighting would continue or how it would end. The Party was preparing people to work underground “just in case”, in case the Red Army Supreme Command should decide to withdraw its troops from Odessa. And it was then that Chernoiivanenko, the leader of the Odessa underground, was writing leaflets on the enemy occupation of Odessa and the Odessa Region and handing these in to be set up, corrected and printed by dozens of people in the Regional Committee's printing shop!

The fourth important task was the selection of people. Although Gavrik Chernoiivanenko did not succeed in finding a good secret place or in setting up a good base, perhaps he had collected together and trained an excellent staff of underground workers? Nothing of the sort! Gavrik chose as one of his leading “assistants” Leonid Tsimbal, secretary of the Oridiopol district of the Communist Party. What sort of person was Tsimbal, a man chosen for underground work? He was nearly thirty years of age. He was “a very gay person, mischievous, a Black Sea man, a real native of Odessa, in the best sense of this expression”. Katayev lets himself go in his description of Leonid Tsimbal as a gay man, with an unflagging sense of humour, accepting life as a joyful thing. The writer's idea is clear to us. But the working out of this idea in the novel is unsatisfactory. Below is a description of Tsimbal in Odessa's difficult, threatening days, days full of drama. “He turned up everywhere where weary people's spirits needed raising. His soothing words, his chatter, his special Black Sea sayings could be heard day and night in the most dangerous of the defence sectors. Sometimes, with the *bold abandon of a born Odessa rhymester*, Lyonya Tsimbal would suddenly stamp his feet, and *toss off rhymes* which had come into his *mischievous head* (God only knows where from), at the same time imitating an orchestra with his lips; his eyes twinkling roguishly, blowing out his cheeks, he would imitate the refrain . . . *mba, mba, mba* . . . and then, with renewed force, would go on intoning to the accompaniment of *bomb-bursts*.” That is the sort of person Leonid Tsimbal was! Who was he? Secretary of the District Committee of the Party in Odessa's front-line defence, or indeed a “*true Odessa rhymester*” and joker? To all this we must add that Leonid Tsimbal was foul-mouthed, and that in the company of women. Can it be that it was these facts that were decisive in Gavrik Chernoiivanenko's choice of “assistants”?

His second assistant was Comrade Sinichkin-Zhelezny. He is in direct contrast to Tsimbal. "He was moody, reserved and almost morose." He was an excellent man, a rank-and-file worker, a 1905 Revolutionary, a man who had been in prison and in exile, an active participant in the October Revolution and the Civil War, where he had won his nickname "Zhelezny" [the iron one]. Without a doubt this was an experienced comrade boundlessly devoted to the Party. But what right had Chernoiivanenko to second Sinichkin-Zhelezny to underground work, whatever his value? No right whatsoever. Comrade Sinichkin-Zhelezny was an old man, suffering badly from tuberculosis and, like all boiler-makers, "*rather hard of hearing*". Was it really impossible to find in Odessa healthy younger people for underground work?

The third assistant was Serafim Ivanovich Tulyakov, deputy chairman of the Prigorodny Executive Committee of the Soviet of Working People's Deputies. Of him Katayev writes: "He was one of those not very impressive people who are nevertheless reliable and positive figures with hearts of gold." This would seem to be the most suitable person Gavrik had found for underground work. But he is the very one who is depicted as the most colourless person in the book. We see nothing of his initiative or his work, and know nothing of his feelings or thoughts. Why should such a man have been taken into the catacombs?

Such is the make-up of the underground organisation created by Chernoiivanenko before the departure of our troops from Odessa. All the other heroes in the novel, who became members of the group, were drawn in at the very last moment of the defence of the city or became members by chance. For example, just before the enemy's entry into the city Chernoiivanenko draws into the group his old friend Kolesnichuk and the latter's wife Raissa Lvovna. It is apposite here to describe this occurrence: it is typical not only of Chernoiivanenko but of the new members of his group. Instead of inviting Kolesnichuk, an army man, to come and see him, and proposing underground work to him in private, which a real conspirator should do, Chernoiivanenko goes to the home of the Kolesnichuks for this purpose. There a somewhat odd scene takes place. Raissa Lvovna, Kolesnichuk's wife, categorically refuses to leave the friends to a private conversation, and Gavrik at once falls in with this. "Right you are," *he says lightly*. "Stay. I trust you." True, Gavrik has known Raissa Lvovna for a long time, but that he, an old underground worker and conspirator, should be so easy-going is most unlikely. And so Raissa Lvovna guesses without the slightest difficulty that Gavrik intends her husband to remain underground in the city, and she "raises Cain". She refuses to be evacuated, for she is a loving wife and cannot live far away from her husband—"Where he goes, I go." Evidently this argument seemed to Gavrik Chernoiivanenko a very powerful one and proved a perfectly good reason for accepting Raissa Lvovna as suitable for underground work. Gavrik "quickly took a bold decision," writes Katayev. "'Look here,' he said, knitting his bulging brow in a preoccupied way, 'if you like, I'll take you too.'" And thus did two more "underground workers" appear in Gavrik's group.

The remainder of his group turned up quite accidentally: the driver Svyatoslav, Matryona Terentyev, her young daughter Valentina, and the boy Petya Bachei. Their role in the underground work is a very modest, even a negligible, one, though the author occasionally devotes too much space to them in his novel. And so we have all the underground workers described in the novel. Gavrik somewhat oddly calls all the people he has collected in the catacombs the "Party Group." Yes, really. This is indeed a Party group; a very small one, though, seeing that hundreds and thousands of Soviet people lived in the catacombs!

One can hardly believe one's eyes when one reads of Gavrik's feelings towards underground work. In one place, Katayev depicts him walking through besieged Odessa. Gavrik's soul is full of "battle-feeling", "that sharp, incomparable and almost joyous feeling of *mortal danger*", of the icy resolution to go to meet this danger, of the *doomed* feeling of obligation that had subordinated all his thoughts and actions to itself, had wholly swallowed up his personality, and had drawn a sharp dividing line between himself and the city, as he walked through it with his quick, rolling, purposeful gait". Why? What does Katayev mean? (I am not referring to Katayev's rather outmoded "prettiness" of language.) Look again and you will see what Katayev means. At this moment Gavrik "belonged entirely to his homeland. *But the city was no longer his homeland . . . it was a pointless conglomeration of familiar buildings, acacia trees, granite and asphalt pavements and all of it had already lost its soul*". Such were the feelings Gavrik experienced as he passed through his native city when the enemy was not yet in it, when Soviet soldiers from the four corners of our land were shedding their blood in its defence though it was no more to them than a place on the map. Such were his feelings as he prepared to go underground to fight for the honour of his native city.

And here we see Gavrik in the catacombs. An army unit has its HQ in the hide-out Gavrik has chosen. It is the last unit to leave the city. A tragic moment! It is difficult to imagine the emotion of Gavrik Chernoiivanenko when he learns of the departure of the last troops from his beloved Odessa! Enemy units may be in the town in an hour or two. What will they do to the people remaining behind? It seems to us that at such a moment Chernoiivanenko would be preoccupied, serious, stern—there might even be tears in his eyes. . . . But that is not the Chernoiivanenko of the novel! His feelings at the moment the underground takes over are most peculiar. Katayev writes: "A boyish sparkle suddenly glinted in his eyes. He folded his arms proudly on his chest, thrust a foot forward, raised his head and crowed: 'A smugglers' den!'" Here is a Party secretary comparing the hide-out where Odessa Bolsheviks are concealed, to a smugglers' den! What could be more out of place than such a scene?

Katayev does not show us Chernoiivanenko's thoughts in the first moments of underground work. Was Gavrik thinking of the length of time they would have to live in the hide-out, the difficulties they would have, the problems of organising the struggle against the enemy? No. Katayev writes: "Strange as it may seem," (and here we cannot but fully agree) "at that moment, his thoughts *deep down inside him* struck chords in his soul so powerfully that for a moment *Gavrik was completely transported to the world of his early youth*. . . ." Apparently it was the romantic world of his early youth that was beginning for this old Bolshevik, not a grim, harsh struggle with the enemy needing quick thinking, calculated thought, and endurance. True, these "childhood visions" passed quickly, but one cannot but ask why and how they appeared in Chernoiivanenko's mind at that grim moment of his life?

Gavrik Chernoiivanenko's group lived for more than two years in the catacombs before the liberation of Odessa. What did the group do all that while? Katayev's novel is a long one of over 600 pages. One would imagine he might draw many pictures of the heroic struggle of Gavrik's group in his book; he has the space. On the contrary: he uses this space unskillfully. Dozens of pages are devoted to the wanderings of Petya Bachei through the city, and to recalling the "world of daddy's childhood", though this has not the slightest bearing on the underground struggle in Odessa, which is, after all, the central subject-matter of the novel.

Katayev writes that "the underground fought ardently and tirelessly". I

do not doubt that this was so. On the first day of life in the catacombs, shots were exchanged with the enemy when Matryona Terentyeva, Valentina and Petya Bachei were escaping from the enemy and were near the entrance to the catacombs. Between that date and December 13, when the defeat of the Germans near Moscow was announced, the underground workers sat in the catacombs and *did nothing*. Their *first action* appears after the first 208 pages and that is an *accidental* skirmish with the Germans while distributing leaflets on the Moscow victory. Their second action was the blowing-up of the Rumanian invaders' HQ. It must be said that this action is described in drab and superficial terms. After this Gavrik decided, heaven alone knows why, since the enemy had not undertaken any military operations against the group, that the latter should cease its activities and pretend to be crushed and even finally disbanded. Nothing further is undertaken until December 1942 and thus to the 208 pages are added a further 108 in which two actions only are described.

In the latter part of their first year of struggle, when the author makes Gavrik "pretend to be dead", his group considerably increases in size. The underground establishes contact with a couple of dozen Communists living in the city, and sets them tasks; they begin "sabotage in the port, at railway stations, in factories, even in the police force". The author's description of this work is dry and boring. "Separate groups and individuals operated with the greatest care, with fearful stubbornness, driving the invaders to fury and desperation. . . . The underground's widespread activities were directed by a single partisan centre and they always felt that they were not alone, that there were many of them, and that their number was daily increasing. . . ." But there is not a single word in the whole novel describing *how* Gavrik Chernoiivanenko got together the devoted people he needed, *how* he entrusted them with tasks, or *how* these were carried out.

What then does Katayev describe of the work of Gavrik's group in their first fifteen months in the catacombs? At far greater length than that given to any fighting, he tells how the underground built Gavrik a study. What is more, Katayev actually begins his description of life underground with this. The group spent a fortnight hacking out a table for Gavrik, a conference table, armchairs, and so on. Gavrik held daily meetings of the District Committee, which, "however short, were according to custom and rule-book". These meetings discussed everything—and nothing. For example, Gavrik threatens with a bureau meeting and a reprimand anyone failing to clean his teeth with powdered limestone, in the absence of toothpowder. And "a special dispensation from the District Committee Bureau is required for lighting the primus"!

No member of the Union of Soviet Writers being present, Chernoiivanenko writes and sings the following song for the New Year festivities.

"Along a tortuous road we march
Long, long is to be our path,
Filled with *alarm* are our hearts,
Powerless, we cannot draw breath.
Wherever you turn, there are barriers,
Tsar Hunger is gnawing at us.
No Fascist mercy do we expect.
And death is at our shoulder.
But since there's *no way out*, what can we do?
We shall not ask mercy of the enemy:
All of us, as one man, for the freedom,
The happiness of the people, *will die.*"

—and so on.

Katayev is at great pains to describe in detail the "commission shop" Kolesnichuk sets up, with which he soon goes bankrupt, being unfamiliar with the bestial "laws" of capitalism; but of the people who met in the shop to exchange sabotage experiences, Katayev writes merely in passing.

You will appreciate that Katayev has devoted a lot of attention to the daily life of the underground. We are not against that. Without such descriptions it would be difficult for the reader to imagine the conditions in which the underground lived in the catacombs. But the pity is that Katayev has devoted an entirely disproportionate part of his book to the trivial details of everyday life, which has damaged the small part allotted to the heroism of the group's struggle. The heroic struggle of the Odessa underground obviously does not get much space in Katayev's enormously long novel. It may be objected that this novel is really a tale about the boy Petya Bachei, and that Katayev has never claimed to have made it a broad canvas to depict the Odessa underground movement. But this is not so. In *Lone White Sail* Gavrik is undoubtedly the central figure, always at the hub of events. It is a story about and for young people, though read with pleasure by grown-ups. It is a different matter, however, in *For the Power of the Soviets*. Though a good deal of attention is devoted to Petya, especially at the beginning of the novel, he is not the central figure. Events are not shown through Petya's eyes; rather he is an involuntary participant in them. Moreover, Katayev himself writes in his foreword: "I shall be happy if I have succeeded in resurrecting at least a few pages from the history of the defence of Odessa, the city that Stalin called a 'hero-city' like Leningrad, Stalingrad and Sevastopol."

When we criticise the book's lack of description of the work of the underground, we are not thinking of a page-by-page description of every action, with one action following hard on another's heels. Katayev should have selected the most characteristic, the most heroic, the most outstanding; his descriptive language should have been truthful, convincing, alive. His novel lacks any logical approach, and Katayev is so conscious of this that he puts it into the mouth of Piotr Bachei. It is true that there were many chance occurrences and coincidences in partisan life; but building the whole of a serious novel about bolshevik struggle against the invaders on such chance circumstances betrays a weakness, a lack of artistry on the part of the author. Katayev was not prepared to work seriously on the composition of his novel. He has piled up chance occurrence on chance occurrence in his efforts to make his book entertaining, and the more he does so, the greater is the book's falseness to life and the more generally counterfeit it appears. Katayev's literary language and style are not much improved in this novel compared with his earlier works. He has many awkward turns of phrase, some trite, hackneyed words and expressions. "A word is a thought, or an empty sound", said Belinsky. In Katayev's novel there are too many empty sounds. Having studied his material only superficially, Katayev has failed to give it artistic form.

The editorial board of the monthly journal *Novy Mir* unfortunately failed to notice the gross shortcomings of *For the Power of the Soviets*, and did not tell Katayev to put in some more work on it. And certain publishing houses hastened to bring out the book in almost the same form in which it appears in the journal. How is this to be explained? Because, no doubt, publishers think that a new book by an experienced and talented writer, who has previously written good books, is bound to be good? This is wrong. No past creative successes give the publishers the right to think that misfortune cannot overtake talented authors. Any new book by any writer must be received as if it were a work by a new writer.

The novel *For the Power of the Soviets* cannot be regarded as a full-

blooded work on the heroic struggle of the Bolshevik underground in Odessa. This subject still awaits an artist. For this novel to remain alive in literature at all, it needs radical, decisive and profound revision. And to this end Valentin Katayev should spare neither time nor effort.

Translated and abridged by ELEANOR FOX.

NOTES: Mikhail Bubenov is a young Soviet writer, whose first novel, *The White Birch*, won a Stalin prize in 1947, shortly after he had been demobilised. This novel is available in the SCR Library, both in Russian and in English. Bubenov is now writing Book Two of the novel.

For those interested in this example of Soviet literary criticism of an established author by a young writer, attention is drawn to the article on the same novel by V. Yermilov, formerly editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, in No. 81 of that journal on October 8, 1949, and to Yermilov's review of F. Panferov's new novel, *Velikoye Iskusstvo*, in Nos. 9 and 10 of the same, 1950.

For those interested in the article by A. Fadeyev on *Literary Criticism* in Vol. XI, No. 1 of the ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL, further contributions by various hands appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* Nos. 83, 95 & 104, 1949. A summary of these contributions will shortly be made available in duplicated form, price 1/- (6d. to SCR members).

THIRTEENTH PLENARY SESSION OF USW



The thirteenth Plenary Session of the USSR Union of Soviet Writers opened in Moscow on January 25, 1950, and lasted for eight days. Over 600 writers, poets, dramatists, teachers, publishers and others participated in the work of the Session. The agenda comprised reports and discussion on Uzbek literature, on Soviet children's literature and on literary criticism. Organisational matters were also discussed.

The first two days were devoted to reports by S. Rashidov, chairman of the Uzbek Union of Soviet Writers, and by N. Tikhonov, Deputy General Secretary of the USSR Union of Soviet Writers. Sixteen writers from many of the national Republics took part in the discussion.

K. Simonov reported on Soviet children's literature, with a co-report by A. Korneichuk, on the third and fourth days. A lively discussion followed, in which over thirty writers, teachers and editors spoke. A. Fadeyev made the opening report on literary criticism and its tasks.

Among other members elected to the Secretariat of the USSR Union of Soviet Writers were Alexei Surkov and Fedor Panferov; new members of the USW Board include Mikhail Bubenov, Nikolai Gribachev, Arkady Perventsev, Mirzo Tursun-Zade, Boris Polevoy, Petrus Brovka.

Over a hundred people participated in the discussions arising from the reports. Articles on literature for children and on children's writers appeared in Soviet journals and newspapers in Russian well before the opening of the Plenary Session. They were contributed by teachers and laymen as well as by writers.

BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Octyabr* No. 7, 1949; *Novy Mir* No. 11, 1949; *Literaturnaya Gazeta* Nos. 60, 69, 70 & 72, 1949; Nos. 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 & 12, 1950.

SOVIET COMPOSER'S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

MR. LEONARD CASSINI *has kindly permitted us to print the following extracts from a letter received by him from DMITRI KABALEVSKY in reply to the questions he sent to him after his recent visit to Great Britain.*

Question: Could you define your general attitude to music?

Answer: I think the answer to this question depends on the artist's general views on art, on its function and social role. I am convinced that the real artist (that is, any creator, including a composer) tries in his work to reach out to people, telling them in his work of what can inspire them, give them pleasure and help them in their lives, in their labour and in their struggle. It is this need to exchange experiences with people, this need to be useful and to give joy to one's people, that is "the basic strength" that stimulates creation. Let me recall Chaikovsky's words, which would, I am sure, be approved by any true artist: "With all my heart I desire my music to be known as widely as possible, I desire the number of people who find comfort and support in it to increase."

The individualist artists take up exactly the opposite stand. They consider the mere thought of the public unworthy of their great calling. It is worth while recalling, for example, Stravinsky's words: "In regard to art the people is a collective term which I never take into account." Schonberg asserts even more unequivocally that the composer ceases to be a real composer from the moment he begins to think of the public. Such artists think only of themselves and shut themselves up in their own narrow world: naturally their works cannot attract or move *many* people, and these works remain an object of aesthetic interest in a narrow circle of connoisseurs resembling the composers themselves. I do not think I risk being mistaken if I say that the future does not belong to their music.

Question: What in your opinion are the reasons or impulses that lead a composer to write a given work?

Answer: These reasons and impulses are so varied and individual that it is of course impossible to summarise them. One thing seems to be indisputable: the more considerable those reasons are, and the greater their general significance (in the sense of the works being accessible and pleasing to many people), the more important such work will be when given life by the composer.

Question: What would you say of your own early works?

Answer: Speaking of oneself is always difficult and sometimes simply impossible: so I will be very brief. The first sonata was a weak and immature composition (written two years before I finished the Conservatoire) and is not worth mentioning. The second sonata (1945) is filled with the events of the recent war. In the first movement are to be heard echoes of warfare, and in the second a sad lullaby, while in the third the breath of tempestuous and immortal life makes itself felt: if you can hear all this you will understand without much difficulty what thoughts and feelings held sway over me when I wrote it.

I told you about the third sonata when we met, and find it difficult to add anything to what I said then. [Mr. Kabalevsky told me that his third sonata expressed the impact of war upon the world of children in various ways, and in the last movement describes the triumph of that world over the forces of destruction.—L.C.]

The sonatina in D major represents mischievous, happy children who are nevertheless prepared to sit still for a few minutes to listen to an interesting fairy tale (represented by the second movement of the sonatina). The violin concerto is on our young people. The subject of the first movement is their steadfastness, endurance, and boundless energy; the subject of the second movement is first love; the subject of the finale is leisure, games, dancing. I would add that one of the tasks I set myself in composing this concerto was an attempt to make it possible of execution by quite young performers.

I see I have overstepped the limits of your question: you were asking about early works. But they are really of no interest whatsoever to anyone!

Question: Do you believe in programme music?

Answer: How is it possible not to believe in programme music when world musical literature contains such wonderful examples of it as exist for example in the work of Berlioz, Liszt, Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov, Chaikovsky, and so on? I think that all music taken as a whole is in a sense programmatic, in so far as it necessarily expresses something.

In some cases this "programme-ness" is expressed in a very generalised form, being the embodiment in music of any broad idea you care to use in its most general sense (for example, the idea of heroic struggle in Beethoven's symphonies). Sometimes, on the contrary, "programme-ness" when put into practice leads to representational naturalism (this was Richard Strauss's sin). We have become accustomed to calling "programmatic" only music that is supplied with an appropriate programme title or even a literary piece on this "programme-ness". I do not think this is quite correct! With the exception, I believe, of the one orchestral suite *The Comedians* (and not including vocal and instrumental work like *The People's Avengers*), I have not written any music with a "published programme", but you will note from my reply to the previous question that I often set myself programmatic plans.

Question: Have you ever written 12-tonal or any other non-diatonic music?

Answer: I have never written, and never intend writing, in the 12, 17, 22, 29 and so forth tones. It seems to me that our system is still far from being exhausted. I think it is those composers who simply cannot find anything to say in music that thirst after all these new systems. They seek new sound-forms: no matter what kind, as long as they are new! It goes without saying that it is easier to claim to be an original composer in 12-tone music! And with 17-tone music it is even simpler, I can assure you: I have myself played on a 17-tone instrument which we have in Moscow!

As regards "pure" and "abstract" music, I have in essence replied to this in my previous answer.

Question: What do you think are the dangers of the present simplification of Soviet music?

Answer: I think we must strive for *simplicity* but not for *simplification*. These are entirely different things. Simplicity, real artistic simplicity, comes with maturity, with complete mastery of technique, whereas simplification is a sign of poverty of thought. Simplicity must be understood as maximum clarity, "rounded-off-ness", and understandability in presenting the thought. And, of course, simplicity in expression of thought is not in contradiction to the richness of the thought itself. In fact, the opposite is true: the richer your thought, the simpler must be your exposition, provided, that is, you want anyone to understand you! I am ready to strive towards such *simplicity*, though I know how difficult it is of achievement. Writing music that cannot be understood in the belief that complexity and richness

are one and the same is much easier than writing a simple, clear melody which has content and at the same time is understandable.

I think one can only speak of "danger" here when dealing with *simplification*, that is with an impoverishment of the content of the music. If, however, we strive towards *simplicity*, that is towards clarity and comprehensibility, in expressing our thoughts, then the public (whether trained or untrained) will be grateful to us. Of course, the criteria of simplicity vary in varying circumstances, and the simplicity of a mass song is a very different matter from that of a quartet, a symphony or an opera, but then the content and the richness of thought, ideas and feelings in different genres and forms differ also.

Question: What is the present situation regarding Socialist realism, and what was the approximate demarcation line of its entry?

Answer: Every new creative method, every new style, arises and is created gradually, winning positions step by step in a stubborn struggle with the styles and methods that preceded it historically and with all kinds of influences opposed to the new strivings. A study of any epoch in the history of the arts makes this quite plain.

The same may of course be said of the method of Socialist realism. I think the first shoots of Socialist realism in music belong to the boundary line of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and found expression in the songs of the revolutionary underground. A good many years passed before these principles, joining in the struggle against modernistic aestheticism (so widespread in the twentieth century), began to be seen in genres other than song.

We accept the principles of Socialist realism and regard them as the only correct aesthetic platform: but to say that these principles have become fully embodied in all our art would be, to say the least, irresponsible. We never do say so. We simply assert that our art is advancing along this path, that in the struggle against formalistic influences a new style based on the methods of Socialist realism is gradually being born, and that more and more features of this new style are to be seen in the new work of our artists. From this must not be deduced, of course, that in Soviet art there are no works that can be considered to be completely imbued with the principles of Socialist realism: there are many such works, not only in literature, which is in advance of the other arts, but also in painting and music.

These new features are to be seen in music in the following aspects: in the fact that it is thoroughly steeped in contemporary subject-matter, which is striving forward; in the existence of optimistic concepts (I mean a historical optimism, that is a bright glance into the future, and not just "major-key" endings" to works); in the striving to wipe out the boundaries setting up an impenetrable barrier between professional and folk music; in the striving to place in the centre of the work positive heroes expressing the positive and progressive ideas of mankind; and, finally, in a conscious striving, in democratism, in the maximum all-embracingness of art. At the root of all this, in my opinion, lies truthfulness in the depiction of the real world. On such an aesthetic platform, every artist has every opportunity of outstandingly expressing his own individuality, provided, of course, that he has any.

Now you will understand why I cannot answer the question on the demarcation line between Socialist realism and the style that preceded it. In a period when a new style is in process of formation, and especially in the kind of epoch we are now living through, questions of this kind are rather scholastic.

Translated by ELEANOR FOX.

TEACHING STUDENTS TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY

The following is the leading article from the October 1949 issue (No. 10) of VESTNIK VYSSHEI SHKOLY, official organ of the Ministry of Higher Education of the USSR (Editor-in-chief A. M. SAMARIN).

ONE of the most important tasks of higher educational establishments is to organise and guide independent work among students. In the higher schools of the land of socialism this question is by no means one of method alone. Soviet schools are called upon to prepare specialists having a wide general education, a daring mind, and an ability to take independent decisions, show initiative and find new paths. Truly progressive science, as Soviet science is, does not admit of fixed canons or of dead dogma: it "is courageous, able to break resolutely with old traditions, norms and standards when they have become outdated and are acting as a brake on progress: a science capable of creating new traditions, new norms and standards". [Stalin.] The need for outstandingly creative and independent cadres is particularly great in the period of transition from socialism to communism. The task of preparing specialists of this sort determines the direction and character of the study and scientific work in our higher schools.

The Soviet higher school is the most progressive in the world. It provides its pupils with a wide all-round scientific understanding, and a sound and penetrating knowledge, and, above all, teaches them how to study and develops their independence.

If during his years of study the student had been used to receiving "ready made" knowledge, it would be vain to expect him to show independence in his practical work after graduation. Therefore the entire system of teaching in our higher educational establishments is based on the maximum possible use of active forms of teaching and on the development of the student's resourcefulness. In our teaching plans more than fifty per cent of the time is devoted to this purpose. The widest possible use is made of laboratory work; students are set all kinds of tasks calculated to develop their creative activity. The planning of study and diploma work, which develops in particular the capacity of independently applying acquired knowledge to practical problems, the character of the lectures and of work in seminars, all have a single common aim in view: that of giving a wide education, teaching how to study, developing resourcefulness. The widespread students' study groups and societies bear witness to the activity and independent initiative which characterise our young people during their years of study.

Our higher educational establishments wish to give their students the greatest and most comprehensive knowledge possible. This is a great merit. However, as Lenin once pointed out, shortcomings sometimes seem to arise from merit. This may be said of some shortcomings in the practical work of our higher schools. The wide scope of the curricula, in accord with the level of contemporary science, the desire to give as much knowledge as possible to the students, not infrequently leads in practice to the students being overburdened, and this in turn leaves them little time for independent work on mastering science. It is quite natural that every Chair should consider its particular subject important and take care to teach it as fully as possible

and to recommend to the student as much reading-matter as possible. But the human capacity for assimilating knowledge is not unlimited, and if all the Chairs oblige students, with the best of intentions, to study so much as to make it physically impossible in the time at their disposal to absorb it all, then the students will naturally start trying to find some way out by using abstracts, popular brochures, and so on and so forth. It would be unjust to attribute such deplorable phenomena to the students' laziness or disinclination for independent work. On the contrary, inherently our young people are extremely eager for work and knowledge. The explanation of the insufficiency of independent work lies in most cases in the way the educational process is organised and the planning of study arranged. If a student of the humanities has to plough through hundreds of pages of serious literature for his regular seminar, he will not, unless he is a Solomon, be able to do so conscientiously. Or if a student at a higher technical school is given as much homework to do in one week as would take at least twice the time he has at his disposal, it is no wonder if he does his work superficially and hurriedly.

The teaching curriculum determines the exact amount of knowledge a student has to acquire in the years he spends at college. As science develops, as new fields of knowledge are opened up, teaching programmes become wider, a process which must however be accompanied by serious methodological work on the best possible ways of imparting the programme material to the students. Unfortunately, in many higher educational institutions, work on methodology is backward. It is not keeping pace with the rapid tempo of scientific development, and thus gives rise to serious shortcomings in the teaching process and is particularly damaging to students' independent work. Often, instead of considering carefully how best to present the subject and what could without detriment be omitted from the programme, some Departments have embarked on a race against time. Nothing can replace a methodological analysis of the most important aspects of teaching; even an increase in teaching hours cannot save the situation. Unlimited speeches may be made on the importance of independent study, appeals may be made to the students to work harder, but if the teaching itself is not organised as it should be, all appeals will be in vain. Their own experience has taught many educational establishments that the stage of merely discussing the overworking of students can be passed, and the necessary conditions for independent work created, only by a prolonged and careful analysis of methods.

This issue of *Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly* contains an article on the experiences of the Bauman Higher Technical School and of the Molotov Institute of Energetics in Moscow. Both these schools have taken steps to lighten the students' burden. The value of their experiences lies in the fact that they have succeeded in releasing for independent study a considerable amount of the students' time, and in achieving a more rational utilisation of teaching hours. This they have attained by a careful planning of the curriculum, without limiting its scope, by eliminating repetition in closely related subjects, and by various other steps. The experience of the Moscow Institute of Energetics is a further corroboration of the vital importance of a teaching process based on scientific principles, and of the need for each educational institution to work out a system and method which will not only make for better learning but will also accustom the student to rational brainwork.

The directors of all higher educational establishments must pay more attention than at present to details on which the entire teaching system and the success of the students' independent work will to a large extent depend. A methodical and well-thought-out time-table is a very important

factor regulating teaching activity. The timetable must be planned on scientific principles, not to suit primarily the convenience of the lecturers, but with a view to making the most rational use of the strength and capacities of the students. It is necessary to see to it that libraries and reading rooms work properly and that students do not have to waste time owing to mismanagement and lack of system on the part of the workers who are there to assist them. The students' hostel life, the students' recreation, their proper use of physical culture (a most important factor in increasing the productivity of intellectual work): all these matters should always be of interest to the directors of a higher educational institution, as they all have an important bearing on the organisation of independent work among students.

To obtain really fruitful independent work from the students, appropriate methods must be presupposed in lectures, laboratory work, industrial practical training and in seminars. If wrong methods are used, even the most active forms of teaching may become passive. Unfortunately such cases do exist. Sometimes students receive so much guidance from their teachers in laboratory work that they hardly ever learn how to work independently. Sometimes problems are solved by one student at the black-board, while all the other students accept the solution quite passively. This is of course intolerable. All ways and means used by teachers must aim ultimately at developing the students' ability to work independently.

It is essential that serious methodological work should be devoted to the preparation of new text-books. Until recently, when manuscripts due for publication were discussed, attention was focused entirely on the subject-matter of the future text-book. Naturally the scientific content is of foremost importance, but the construction and style of the book must also be considered. The excessive size and unnecessarily difficult style of many of our text-books often hinder the work of our students. Thus the preparation of text-books has also in many ways a direct bearing on independent work by students.

We may say without exaggeration that the question of guiding the independent work of students is the crux of many methodological problems in every branch of the teaching process. This is clearly demonstrated by the letters from professors and students published in this journal, stating their views on this question. The authors of the letters voice many different opinions, but they all agree on one point: to succeed in teaching students to work independently, it is essential that there should be constant improvements in the methods used in lectures, text-books, exercises, homework, revision, and so on, that is in every aspect of the teaching process. Any steps taken in this respect by an institute as a whole must be accompanied by corresponding movements in every Department, taking into account the special aspects of its particular subject. The teacher's aim should always be to teach the students to work independently, to develop their taste for reading and their love of books. Books contain the great treasures of human knowledge. They provide a mighty weapon in the fight for knowledge and education, and experience teaches that nothing can replace independent work on a book, since to a large extent to be educated means to be well-read. Important as lectures and consultations may be, they are in the last analysis meant to help the student to understand books, to master science independently. The higher educational establishment must teach its students how to read books. There are people who read widely yet think little. If memory is used in reading rather than active thought, the result is dogmatism and bookishness. Students must be taught to read in a different way so as to understand the essence of what they have read, not merely memorise various conclusions and statements. Students must be

taught how to summarise books and use bibliographies, reference books and dictionaries. We should not however attempt to give any general all-embracing rulings on this. Such "recipes" merely appear to be helpful, but in actual fact they prevent the student from using his own accumulated experience, from developing his own method of work, from perfecting himself.

The higher educational establishment must help every student to attain what Lenin so persistently stressed in calling on young people to develop the "capacity to absorb into themselves the sum total of human knowledge, and to absorb it so that Communism is with you not something you have memorised but something you have thought out for yourselves, an inescapable deduction from modern culture".

In the Soviet Union no specialist can consider his education completed when he leaves the higher educational institute. The entire structure of our life, the rapid development of science and technique, and the ever-growing demands made on our cadres, oblige him to continue learning, to perfect himself, to advance. The better the schooling a worker has received, the more successful will his creative development be. And the quality of the school is determined not only by the thoroughness and depth of the knowledge it has imparted to its pupils, but also by the extent to which it has succeeded in giving them a capacity for independent work, a permanent thirst for knowledge, a persistence in their work, and a determination to reach their goal. Soviet higher educational institutions are tackling great problems. Their work, of preparing qualified cadres who can meet the demands made on them by a society that is building communism, is constantly growing. The more attention our Institutes pay to the development and organisation of independent work by students, the sooner they will succeed in preparing and educating cadres capable of initiative and of great creative achievements.

INDEPENDENT READING AS THE METHOD OF MASTERING MARXIST-LENINIST THEORY

by V. V. Antonova, *lecturer at the Molotov Institute of Energetics, Moscow.*
(From the same issue of *VESTNIK VYSSHEI SHKOLY*.)

THE most important characteristic of teaching in higher educational establishments is its reliance on the independent work of students. The Central Committee of the Communist Party (B) and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, in a resolution passed as early as June 23, 1936, suggested that great attention should be paid "to independent work done by students in libraries, archives, laboratories, seminar rooms ("cabinets") or at home, and students should be helped by consultations". In studying Marxist-Leninist theory, independent work organised on a sound basis is particularly important, and, as the Central Committee pointed out, "the main, the basic way of studying Marxism is through independent reading". The appearance of *The Short History of the CPSU(B)* and of the new editions of Lenin's and Stalin's works has given us a first-rate opportunity for independent theoretical study.

Young people who are just beginning to learn Marxism-Leninism need assistance, however. When studying particular problems of Marxism-Leninism, students have to refer constantly to many different works, as a single problem is often discussed from different angles in several of the classics. It is well known that a very large proportion of Marxist-Leninist classical literature is of a polemical character, and students insufficiently acquainted with the historical background in which these works were

written, and with the opinions of those the polemics were directed against, have difficulty in finding their way through these works on their own. Also it must not be forgotten that Marxism-Leninism is a living science and as such is constantly developing and being enriched. A student who is studying original sources must be able to assess how a particular problem has been analysed at different stages of historical development. Only thus can his studies bear fruit and help him to learn how to relate historical materialism to contemporary conditions.

We have set ourselves the task of basing students' independent work on Marxism-Leninism on a definite system. It is the most important duty of higher educational establishments to develop in students an organic desire to study Marxism-Leninism constantly, so that after leaving the Institute the specialist wants to go on reading independently and raising his ideological and political level. The Chair of Marxism-Leninism in the Institute starts from the conviction that the development in the student of a desire for independent reading depends on the way Marxism-Leninism is taught. Consultation and methodical advice to students will only be effective if the nature of the teaching is such that it stimulates independent work. The main point is that lectures and seminars should be such as to inspire the student to read independently and to give profound thought to his work on original sources.

In this connection the nature of lectures is of particular importance. We have aimed at making our lectures precise and carefully planned so as to present the problem, develop it with logical strictness and draw the final conclusions. As a rule, we present the outline of the lecture to the students before we begin. Everybody knows that seminars should be preceded by independent work by the students on the material to be discussed. Therefore we always like the seminar to be preceded by a lecture which analyses the general significance of a particular work, its place in classic Marxist-Leninist literature, and its historical background. Such a lecture should not be given after the students have already discussed the subject in their seminar, but before; this involves close co-operation between the lecturer and the tutor in charge of the seminar. Therefore we discuss at our Departmental staff meetings not merely some particular study or course of lectures, but the whole plan of presentation of the subject from the introductory lecture to the final seminar. Thus we ensure co-operation between lecturer and seminar tutor and give a definite aim and purpose to our entire work.

Consultations play an important part in the preparation for seminars. Experience has taught us, however, that these consultations very often tended to degenerate into coaching and cramming of the students, and did not stimulate independent work. We have changed the character of group consultations. They are mainly now devoted to a survey of the relevant literature, advice on methods, and the clarification of difficult points. Such consultations further independent work but do not provide a substitute for it. We also have consultations specially devoted to difficulties encountered by the students. We should, however, consider it wrong to reduce a consultation to mere replies to questions. In seminars and consultations, tutors check the work done on previous lectures and on the recommended reading. Experience has shown that good results can be obtained in seminars by well-conducted discussions of précis work done by students. We want to develop in our students a persistence in their study of serious books, and we want them to understand that the Marxist-Leninist classics have to be referred to time and time again. We point out to our students that in his lecture on the state Lenin called upon his listeners at Sverdlovsk University to study the works of Marx and Engels and warned them that "although . . . the difficulties of the exposition might at first frighten some people away, it

must be repeated once again that this should not disconcert them, as the passages which seemed unintelligible at first will become clear when they are read a second time". We always advise students to read a book right through first, without paying close attention to parts that appear unclear: chapters very often become clear and intelligible in the light of subsequent chapters. Then they must proceed to a close study of separate chapters. In cases where a particular subject requires the examination of several original sources, we give advice as to the most suitable sequence of reading. As such advice is not given in a general form, but is based on specific material, it helps students in their independent study.

Independent work by students improved considerably when we introduced compulsory progress reports by students at every stage of the curriculum. These reports are charted on graphs which indicate definite periods for which reports on the students' progress have to be submitted. Such supervision helps to eliminate "racing ahead" ("over-hurried work") and helps to make independent work systematic. We want our lecturers to help to arrange the students' independent work by planning lectures, seminars and systematic inquiries, and we set aside a definite time for the study of methods with the students. From the start, at the very beginning of the course, the teaching staff and the students meet to discuss methods of doing independent work on the Marxist-Leninist classics. Explanations are given on note-taking, précis-writing, and so on. We have even produced a small text-book on method: *Beginners Handbook for the Study of Marxism-Leninism*. This handbook discusses the significance of the study of the Marxist-Leninist classics and contains examples and specimens of notes and précis. The handbook is produced in photostat copies and is widely used. The Marxist-Leninist "cabinet" organises regular lectures which help students in their independent work. Special consultations are arranged, in the course of which students learn how to read books, how to discriminate between essential and secondary points, how to take notes, how to formulate their own thoughts, how to make abstracts from books, and so on. In particular we have thought it important to teach students how to make the best use of dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference books. Very often students ask to have some foreign word or political concept explained, the essence of which they might easily have found for themselves by consulting the appropriate work of reference.

The Marxist-Leninist "cabinet" helps students by arranging special exhibitions and by the issue of reading-lists of books recommended on each subject. One exhibition, for example, contained a great deal of interesting material on the methods used, in their work on books, by the Marxist-Leninist classic writers, by great representatives of Russian culture, and by outstanding Soviet intellectuals. Another exhibition showed many specimen copies of abstracts, précis, outlines for lectures, and so on. All periodicals and literature are assembled in the Marxist-Leninist "cabinet", which the students eagerly make use of. The fact that in 1948/9 the "cabinet" issued 63,000 books, as against 40,000 in 1947/8, bears witness to the growing demand for Marxist-Leninist literature and to the increase in independent reading. In this connection it is important to add that students prefer the classics to popular publications. The demand for works by Lenin and Stalin is particularly great.

The academic staff and the Party organisation of the Institute pay particular attention to the Marxist-Leninist education of students in the senior courses, who, unlike the juniors, do not have contact with the staff of the Chair of Marxism-Leninism in teaching hours. A system of papers written by students and subsequent discussion of the papers at theoretical conferences has become very widespread during the last two years. The

critical discussion is intended not so much as an appraisal of the papers, but as practical help for the students' future independent work. In addition to the staff of the Chairs of Marxism-Leninism and of Political Economy, representatives of other Chairs, particularly graduates of the Marxist-Leninist University, have been drawn in to participate in the discussions and help the students. The most interesting papers were brought before students' conferences for discussion. The Marxist-Leninist Chair seconded members of its staff to help students with the preparatory work for the conferences and worked out thematics for lectures and papers. Qualified advice was at the disposal of the speakers and of the participants in the conferences. A conference on the subject of *The Relationship between Philosophy and the Natural Sciences* awakened great interest among the students. Papers were read on *Herzen and the Relationship between Philosophy and the Natural Sciences*; *Lenin and the Crisis in Contemporary Bourgeois Physics*; and so on. This conference stimulated a large number of students to study philosophical questions in greater detail. Other conferences centred on such questions as *The People's Democracies*; *The Gradual Transition from Socialism to Communism*; and so on. For the current academic year, conferences are being planned on *The Role of Socialist Consciousness in the Development of Soviet Society*; *The Crisis of the Bourgeois Democracies*; *The Progressive Role of Russian Science in the Development of World Civilisation*; *The Principles of the Development of Socialist Society*; *Stalin on the Socialist State*; *Dialectical Materialism and Physics in the Twentieth Century*; and so on.

The very important part played by the Komsomol organisation of our Institute in the organisation of the independent study of Marxist-Leninist theory must be mentioned. The Komsomol Study Bureau and the Komsomol Committee of the Institute work systematically with every single student, discuss questions concerning students' work on different subjects at their meetings, observe progress, make it possible for good work to be widely appreciated, and criticise the negligent and backward.

In organising students' independent work our main consideration is to teach them a self-reliance and a capacity for creative thought that will enable them to absorb the essence of Marxism-Leninism consciously and organically. We want to teach them to be persistent and systematic in their studies and in their attempts to overcome the difficulties that are inevitable in the study of Marxism-Leninism as in every other serious scientific work.

THE STUDENTS' TIMETABLE AND THE TEACHING PLAN

by L. P. Lazarev, lecturer at the Bauman Higher Technical School, Moscow. (*Ibid.*)

THE quality of the teaching in higher educational establishments depends to a great extent on the way the students' time is utilised and their independent work organised. This question has always attracted the attention of professors and teachers and has been broached at literally every Departmental meeting, but there has never been an over-all collection of factual material on the subject. For this reason the Education Department of the Bauman Higher Technical School has carried out an analysis of the planning and allocation of the time at the disposal of students. This work, started as early as 1947, has not only served to disclose shortcomings, but has also given rise to a number of practical measures to improve the planning of the teaching process.

We spent some time on a critical examination of the various tasks set to students, and have compared the time which the teachers responsible for

setting the tasks considered necessary for their performance with the time actually spent by the students. A large number of our staff took part in this work. They all noted the high quality of the students' work, but at the same time had to point out that many tasks were overloaded with purely mechanical calculations and too much time had to be spent on technical formulation. Moreover, analysis of the students' work on problems showed that insufficient use is made of slide-rules and calculating-machines for mechanical calculations.

When we totted up the time which, in the opinion of the teaching staff, was necessary for the performance of all the tasks set, it appeared that in the third term the presumed amount of work was 4.5 to 5 hours a day and 25 to 30 hours a week. This does not include routine tasks in the various subjects, which add 2 to 3 hours a week per subject to the students' work. Thus it was found that students have to spend 35 to 40 hours a week in the first term, and over 30 to 35 hours a week in the third, on compulsory independent work. [A "term" is a half-year, or semester.]

This was an eye-opener. Indeed, if it is taken into account that students do 6 hours of work in college daily, it is impossible to plan their homework on the basis of 5 to 6 hours a day and expect it to be productive.

However, the plan of the teaching staff is only one side of the question. It was interesting to find out how the students' time was spent in actual fact. For this purpose we drew up questionnaires on the students' time-tables which were distributed to students to be filled in over one week. In these questionnaires we provided for account to be given of the time spent on compulsory work such as attendance at lectures, laboratories and Institute workshops, the time spent on independent work on problems and diagrams set as home tasks, the time spent on the study of theoretical material and on the reading of technical literature, on participation in scientific-technical work, on the study of Marxism-Leninism, on the attendance at optional lectures and seminars, on social and political activities, on literary and musical evenings, on visits to theatres and cinemas, on the reading of belles-lettres and newspapers, on sports, on personal needs and on sleep. We also allowed room for facts which would allow of classifying each individual student and the conditions in which he works: what course he is taking, whether he is a Party member, what his examination results were for the past term, what social work he is doing, whether he lives at home or in a hostel, whether he does his quota of independent work, whether he works mainly at home or in the Institute, which single aspect of his work he finds particularly over-taxing. In order not to place the student under any obligation and in order to obtain as objective a picture as possible, we did not make it compulsory for the name to be filled in on the questionnaire. [Questionnaires reproduced on pages 32 and 33.]

The questionnaires were distributed 600 at a time, at different periods during the term. Approximately one third of the cards distributed were handed in to us. From these questionnaires we ascertained that students spend from 11 to 12 hours a day on their studies during the first, third and fifth terms. Even if one allows for a certain amount of exaggeration, it is still quite obvious that students are overworked and that ultimately this is bound to affect their progress.

First-year students in particular spend too much time on their studies. This appears to be partly due to the fact that they have not as yet adapted themselves to the methods of scientific work in a college, and to insufficient schooling in foreign languages and in drawing. This, however, must not blind us to the fact that they are given too much work to do. To give an example, the first-year curriculum for the study of Marxism-Leninism involves the reading and summarising of 1447 pages of set texts and 1002

CHART OF STUDENT'S TIME-DISTRIBUTION BUDGET PER WORKING DAY								
ACTIVITIES	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	COMMENTS
	Indicate times from...to...							
Get up, breakfast								
Travel to School								
Lecture-room work								
Laboratory work								
Set homework								
Projects work & plotting work-graph								
Preparatory work								
Reading technical literature								
Participation in NIR and SNT0*								
Meetings								
Consultations								
Social tasks								
Optional lectures								
Optional seminars								
Independent study of Marxism-Leninism								
Literary & music circles								
Theatres & cinemas								
Sport & physical culture								
Reading literature & newspapers								
Personal matters [laundry, mending, housework etc.]								
Travel from School								
Sleep								

*NIR : *Nauchno Issledovatel'skaya Rabota* (Scientific Research Work).
SNT0 : *Studencheskoe Nauchno Tekhnicheskoe Obshchestvo* (Students' Scientific Technical Society).

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR FILLING IN CHART OF STUDENT'S TIME-DISTRIBUTION BUDGET

The aim of this questionnaire being to show the student's time-distribution budget and indicate ways of improving the studies in the School, the successful achievement of this aim will depend on the objective and conscientious attitude of the student towards filling in the form.

The form, which gives the basic type of activity by days of the week, is to be filled in every evening for a week. Against each type of activity is to be indicated the amount of time spent on it, indicated not by a gross total but by hours from..... to.....

For example : Get up, breakfast—from 6.0 to 7.0
Transit to School—from 7.0 to 7.30
Reading technical literature—from 19.20 to 20.10
and from 22.0 to 23.30
etc.

These time-distribution charts are to be issued to and collected from students of the School by the students' representatives and delivered by them in person to the office of the Dean of their Department.

1. Name (to be given at informant's wish)
2. Department
3. Course [year and semester].....
4. Party [or Komsomol] membership
5. Examination marks for last semester
6. Do you live in a hostel or with your family? (Underline whichever is applicable.)
7. What is the nature of your social work? (Trade Union organiser, Komsomol organiser, propaganda secretary, etc.)
8. Which activity do you find most overtaxing? (Give subjects.)
9. Do you complete your plan of independent work?.....
10. Do you do most of your independent work at the School or at home?

pages of additional texts. This means that students have to study and abstract an average of 72 pages for every seminar every week. For this 15 to 18 hours are required. In actual fact, students spend 2 to 4 hours a week on it. In our talks with students it has become clear that, as they find it impossible to do all the reading recommended to them, they cut it at random, not knowing which are the most important books to include. One of our best scholarship students, an ex-service man and a member of the Party Committee, has told us that he finds it impossible to read systematically all the literature recommended, and has expressed his desire for a more carefully selected reading-list. This testimony is particularly significant as it comes from an excellent student who is usually ahead of schedule with much of his work and who studies supplementary material.

The comparison between the time actually spent on independent work and the time officially allotted to it shows that some of our Departments are not giving much thought to practical reality. Our last example shows how the prescribed amount of work diverges from the amount of work actually done by students during the first term. The picture for other terms is approximately the same. How objectionable this type of planning is, is plain from a student's remarks: "Not enough time. Would like to have a free day to solve my problems, to read technical books and belles-lettres and go to the students' scientific-technical study circle." There are very many remarks of this type, and we need quote no more. Even without them it is quite clear that the excessive amount of homework lowers the standard of learning. In particular, it goes far to explain the lack of progress among first-year students.

We submitted the material at our disposal to careful scrutiny in order to find ways and means of adjusting curricula so as to reduce the amount of independent work set, without lowering its scientific value. It therefore appeared essential to study in detail the question of the content, scope, form and method of the organisation and execution of every aspect of scientific work. This was essential above all as regards work with first-year students. With this aim in view, a number of papers were written, for example, *Methods of Class-room Work*; *General Scientific and Engineering Subjects*; *Methods of Laboratory Work*; *Visual Teaching Aids*; *Planning a Course of Lectures*; and so on. In order to eliminate the gap between the amount of compulsory homework and the time at the disposal of first- and second-year students, a Commission on Methods was set up by our Institute in the spring term of 1949. The Commission was composed of professors and lecturers on general education and engineering. At its meetings it examined independent work set for the Winter Term for first- and second-year students in mathematics, chemistry, physics, theoretical mechanics, descriptive geometry, strength of materials, drawing and foreign languages. It worked out a number of suggestions for changing the scope and content of the tasks and the method of organising independent work. The object was to achieve a systematic study-plan for students which would not take more than 20 to 25 hours of independent work a week.

The Commission proposed alterations in the structure of homework, as well as the replacement of elaborate periodical home tasks; in such subjects as mathematics, physics, foreign languages, chemistry, and so on, by current small tasks and revision papers. Drawing for the machine-building course, for instance, had formerly taken about 140 hours of work in the first term, 70 in the second, 105 in the third, and 95 in the fourth. Teachers of drawing and descriptive geometry examined this question and their suggestion was accepted by the Commission: the third sheet of drawing problems designed for the end of the first term was to be carried over to the beginning of the second term, and at the same time the work of the second term was to be decreased by a reduction in the amount of work on diagrams and drawing.

This freed the students from spending time on overlapping problems and evened out the amount of work done in different terms; now they need 95 to 105 hours a term, or 6 to 7 hours a week, for this work. At the same time it was decided to replace the first and second home tasks in descriptive geometry by independent work in class-time, and two revision papers, also to be done in class-time. The third home task has been revised: it now contains fewer analogous problems and is done on a drawing-sheet. Similar steps have been taken in mathematics and in physics. The curricula of the courses on the strength of materials and theoretical mechanics were revised and it was decided to omit home tasks on certain problems. The Commission accepted the suggestion of the Foreign Languages Department that grammar should from now on be studied in class only, without any set homework, but that reading and translation exercises should still be done at home and that two revision papers a term should be set. This will involve three hours' work a week throughout the term.

Our Institute's Conference on Methods, held in June 1949, endorsed the decisions of the Commission and they were introduced on September 1, 1949.

The free days that have been set aside for independent study are particularly important. Previous experience in this direction has shown that students do in fact use this time for independent work.

It is quite possible to increase the amount of time spent on independent work by first-year students by decreasing the number of lectures and exercises in such subjects as mathematics, chemistry, theoretical mechanics, metallurgy, and so on, where more text-books are available than in more specialised subjects. On no account, however, must the scope of a course be curtailed at the expense of laboratory work, as this more than any other single factor develops the students' capacity for creative independent work. The exercises may be somewhat shortened to tally with the lectures, but they must remain the testing-ground for the theoretical knowledge gained in lectures.

The work done on examining the over-loaded time-tables of our students, and on readjusting the teaching plan, has made it imperative for our entire teaching staff to study the question of methods. This year all departments in the Bauman Higher Technical School will devote even more attention to the organisation of students' independent work. They know that only by doing all in their power to develop independence in their students will they succeed in turning out first-rate Soviet engineers.

HOMEWORK PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION OF SUBJECT

by A. I. Donskoi, *lecturer at the Molotov Institute of Energetics, Moscow.*
(*Ibid.*)

WHEN checking third-year students' revision papers, a lecturer in electro-technics came across gross mathematical errors. Not only did the students make mistakes, they did not know how to correct them. In one instance, a student took "n5" from the table of logarithms instead of "n50". He should have seen his error at a glance, but he did not, and the answer to the problem remained incorrect. Such errors, committed by students who are by no means bad at mathematics, show their inability to apply what they have learned. Teachers who come up against this fact often take the line of least resistance and repeat in their lectures matter already covered in other courses.

To correct these defects the scientific-educational group of the Moscow Institute of Energetics began to analyse them as early as 1945, and came to the conclusion that they could only be overcome on the basis of more and

better independent work by students. Our plans, however, did not allow sufficient time for independent work. According to the 1945 teaching plan, a second-year student had to spend forty hours per week attending classes during his second term, and in addition to that had to summarise text-books on Marxism-Leninism, to hand in ten home tasks, to write five revision papers, and to do drawing and laboratory work on electrotechnics. Thus the student spent from eight to nine hours a day working in the Institute, and naturally had no time left for independent work.

Lack of time gave rise to a singular type of "division of labour": students took turns to do laboratory problems for the whole group, divided homework between them, copied each other's précis, and so on.

Reducing the hours of compulsory study

In the autumn of 1945 the Department of Electromechanics introduced as an experiment voluntary consultations for five groups of third-year students, in place of classes. This meant that classes in electrotechnics, foreign languages, hydraulics, and details of machines, remained on the time-table but were made optional, though revision papers and homework on these subjects remained compulsory. As a result, students had four hours' compulsory classwork twice a week and two hours once a week. In the optional classes teachers led discussions and the students' homework was handed in. The discussions were used regularly only by advanced students, the rest attending only when revision papers and homework were due. At the same time students often requested tutors to do the most typical problems for them. We came to the conclusion that in these circumstances lecturers must not limit themselves to theoretical explanations but must give specific examples in order to show students how to solve problems methodically.

As only five groups of the third-year students were working in the new conditions, and the rest were carrying on in the old way, we had a good opportunity for comparisons. We found that the students in the experimental group put in better attendances and were more attentive at lectures, had more self-assurance at examinations, read more, handed in their papers and other work more regularly, and had a smaller proportion of failures at examination time than any other group of students in the Institute. In the next term we extended this system to other subjects in such a way as to give the students one day a week on which they had no compulsory lectures.

When replacing classes by optional consultations we had to see to it that sufficient teaching aids should be available on that particular subject. In cases where printed material was insufficient, we published lithographed material. Collections of problems of electrotechnics, mechanics, and so on, were produced in this way by members of our staff.

In drawing up our 1948 time-table we greatly reduced the number of classes by discarding minor subjects and by integrating the syllabuses of interrelated subjects, which in some cases enabled us to reduce the number of lectures. Under this new plan optional consultations are no longer essential, as the allocation of days for independent work no longer leads to overwork on the remaining days.

Planning students' independent work

Our next step in relieving students from too much work was to ascertain how much time they needed for their compulsory homework. The usual study-charts merely laid down how much work had to be done per term in each subject and when the students had to submit their work. These particulars were planned separately by each Department, and, as a result, there was no check on the total amount of work to be done on all subjects. To ascertain this total every Department was asked to submit an estimate

of the amount of homework on its particular subject the students were expected to do. It became clear that the total was about twice or three times as much as the students could possibly do in the time at their disposal. In one particular subject, for instance, the students were expected to read 1,000 to 1,500 pages during a nine-week term. If it is taken into consideration that the students also had to work in the laboratory and on a project, it is obvious that such instructions were quite unreal and could not be carried out in fact, owing to lack of time.

An analysis of the study-charts showed further that work was not evenly distributed throughout the term, the second half of the term being overloaded in comparison with the first, particularly where laboratory work was concerned. We have made adjustments in this respect and laboratory work is now evenly spread over the entire term. As a result, it is no longer necessary to indicate which particular hours of the week are to be devoted to independent work, the study-chart of third-year students laying down twenty-five hours of independent work and thirty hours of classroom work a week. Thus, a student's working day should be nine to ten hours, with Sunday free. If, on the days set aside for independent work, the student devotes six to seven hours to it, then on the remaining days he will need to do three to four hours of independent work in addition to classroom work.

At first glance it seems quite inadmissible to start laboratory work simultaneously with the lectures. But experience has shown that if the laboratory work is arranged so as to run exactly parallel to the theoretical lectures, it actually makes for more systematic study, as it enables the student to apply his new theoretical knowledge at once in practice. Further, we have taken steps to help organise laboratory work during the first few weeks: before starting, the tutor questions the students not only to ascertain that they have done preparatory work, but also to develop in them a critical attitude to the work to be done; we have subdivided each group into two or three sections, which work in the laboratory at different times; we have increased the number of examples of work of a similar nature.

On what basis do we plan homework? First we establish the maximum number of hours of work on all subjects: fifty to sixty weekly. From this we deduct the hours spent in various ways at the Institute, and the rest we distribute for homework on the different subjects, taking into account the nature of the subject, its scope and the type of work it requires. When the hours for independent work for each subject have been calculated, the various Departments are informed how many hours they have at their disposal and how studies will be spread over the different weeks of the term, but there is as yet no fixed time-table. Each Department then plans out its homework; this is generally done by the lecturers. As a result the total number of hours for independent work is finally distributed and allocated to definite tasks. On the basis of this, the Secretariat of the Institute draws up the chart of the independent work on all subjects for the term.

How far is the planned amount of time allocated to homework in accord with reality? To be able to answer this question we collected information from students in various courses on the amount of time they spent on laboratory and project work. The information was collected via the students' class-leaders, and the identity of the students was not disclosed to the Secretariat. From this it appeared that the time for work on projects was on the whole allocated correctly. With regard to laboratory work we found that some subjects, such as electrical machinery, demanded more work from the students than had been allowed. We shall obviously have either to find labour-saving devices or to allocate more time to this type of laboratory work at the expense of other subjects. We have not laid down hard-and-fast rules on the planning and allocation of time, and all our Departments are

continuing to work on the problem of finding the most rational methods of reaching our goal.

Co-ordination of related subjects

This is another important factor in reducing the students' burden of work. Here we are not merely thinking of co-ordination in the drawing up of curricula. It is above all essential that teachers should know which part of their course is of importance in relation to other subjects. In this connection I would like to cite the following example: lecturers in mathematics referred only very briefly to complex numbers, thinking that this subject had already been covered sufficiently by the secondary school curriculum. The lecturers in electrotechnics proceeded on the same assumption. As a result the lecture on alternating current remained obscure to the students, to whom the subject appeared fraught with difficulties. They wasted a lot of time on it before discovering the reason for their incomprehension. If the students were well grounded in mathematics they would need considerably less time for electrotechnics. If all the sections of a theoretical course are of equal importance, then stress should be laid on the sections that are particularly useful for the students' special subject.

Co-ordination in compiling the syllabuses of interrelated subjects is equally important. Let us take an example from electrotechnics and physics: the section on *Electric and Magnetic Phenomena* is covered by the physics lecturer in the course of one term, and takes up about one-third of the course. Under our old curriculum the same questions were discussed again in the course on electrotechnics. Under our new programme the two courses were amalgamated and electrostatics and electromagnetics are now covered only in the physics course. At the same time the entire section on electricity has been overhauled so as to make it particularly relevant to the study of electrotechnics.

I have spoken here of the work on teaching methods carried out in one Department of the Moscow Institute of Energetics over several years. The work is continuing, as there is room for improvement. Even what has been done so far, however, has helped to lighten our students' burden of work and has raised the standard of independent work. This is confirmed by the results of the winter examinations in the Department of Electro-mechanics over the last four years. Thus, average marks obtained rose from 3.59 in 1945/6 to 3.83 in 1946/7, 4.13 in 1947/8, and 4.12 in 1948/9. Unsatisfactory marks decreased over these four years from 15% to 2.4%.

We have achieved notable results in the elimination of the disparity between the time spent on compulsory and on independent work; but we have not yet solved this problem in its entirety, and we must continue untiringly to improve the setting for the independent work of our students.

Translated by M. VAZIR

AGRICULTURE CATCHES UP

The New Revolution in the Soviet Countryside

By Jack Dunman

Editor of "The Country Standard," and Secretary of the Berkshire County Committee of the National Union of Agricultural Workers

AGRICULTURE in the Soviet Union is on the threshold of spectacular advances. The developments are now so far reaching, and are so closely integrated with so many sciences and industries, and involve so much technical knowledge, that it is not easy to understand and expound them either in detail or in their full context.

In the debate on *The Situation in Biological Science* (miscalled the Lysenko or Genetics Controversy), frequent reference is made to the new science of agrobiology. Now this really is a new science, which does not exist outside the Soviet Union. It involves and integrates a basic materialist study of the soil and its physical characteristics (founded by the two scientists Dokuchaev and Vasilii Williams, whose work is practically unknown in this country) and its effect on the growth and yield of plants. On one side this connects with geography and the study of climate and of soil erosion. On the other it is concerned with varieties and yields of plants and with methods of livestock improvement. It is here that the conflict between orthodox and Michurin genetics has arisen. The practical side of the new science has been performed not by specialist scientists shut up in laboratories and small experimental farms, but by scientists working with and learning from tens of thousands of workers on the collective and state farms.

Now the practical application of agrobiology, the Fifteen-year Plan, has been in operation for over a year. What are the probable results of this plan? Quite soberly I believe that they can be summed up like this. *Within ten to fifteen years from now the Soviet Union will be producing between 150 per cent and 200 per cent of its present value of crops (grain, technical and vegetable) from about half the present crop area. The other half will be under high quality grass, which will facilitate—and indeed necessitate—an unheard-of increase in livestock and livestock products of all kinds.*

Experts have said that much of the permanent grass in Britain could be improved by ploughing up and re-seeding, up to *six times* its present stock carrying capacity. So the possibilities of livestock expansion are immense.

This will be the *fundamental* result; it leaves out the efforts being made to use hitherto uncultivated land; the effects of the intense campaign to improve the quality of all kinds of livestock; and the by-products such as fruit and, after a little while, timber from the shelter belts themselves.

These somewhat sweeping predictions must now be justified by a study of the facts, remembering that the Fifteen-year Plan was designed to carry forward the achievements of the collective farm campaign, which by the mid-1930s had brought practically the whole of Russia's agricultural land into large-scale collective ownership through the Collective and State Farms.

What had collectivisation achieved by the mid-1930s? For the present changes in Soviet agriculture must be understood in part as the solution of

problems presented by collectivisation. The success of collectivisation meant that:

1. Practically all the agricultural land was now organised in large units.
2. The use of machinery—tractors and combine harvesters—had become widespread and normal.
3. The bulk of agricultural produce was marketed collectively.

But the average yields of crops were low compared with western European or even American and Canadian standards. The old-fashioned fallow method, with its waste of land and low yields, was the main form of crop rotation. Livestock expansion was held up by the lack of good grass; and production was subject to the severe climatic conditions of the European and Asian land mass, yields fluctuating widely according to the seasons, rainfall and winds. As mechanisation was extended, it also became clear that soil erosion would increase and USA experience might even be repeated.

It was to deal with these problems that the Fifteen-year Plan was introduced in October 1948. This was not, of course, a sudden inspiration, but was the result of work and experiment which had been going on long before the war, and but for it would probably have been introduced much earlier.

The problem of increasing production is, under the decree, tackled in the following ways:

1. Making better use of the soil by the introduction of ley-farming methods and better use of manures.
2. This helps also to check soil erosion, which is further attacked by the grandiose scheme for the planting of forest shelter-belts.
3. The breeding of plants and animals for higher yields, and also for yielding over a wider range of climatic conditions.
4. The application of a whole variety of new technical methods which arise from the above.

Use of the Soil

The prevailing system of crop rotation even on collective farms after 1935 appears to have been rotation of perhaps two straw crops and one fallow, with low yields, and the temporary loss of the fallow from production.

The decree proposes to replace the primitive rotation by scientific rotations, called the "*Travopolye System*", involving the extensive use of grass as a crop. This system is based on the work of Vassili Williams (who died in 1939), the son of a Scotsman who settled in Russia as a bailiff and married a Russian. Williams in turn developed the work of the soil scientist Dokuchaev. Williams described his system and its scientific basis in his book *Principles of Agriculture*. This book, though published in Britain in 1948 (Hutchinson's International Publications) in a good translation by G. V. Jacks, has received little of the attention it deserves. It is indeed a book which in scientific literature may well rank alongside *The Origin of Species*.

The war-time increase in production in Britain was based upon increasing the area of crops at the expense of permanent grass. In the opinion of many experts, including Sir George Stapledon, the way to increase production still further would be to go on along the same road until the permanent grass was down to its irreducible minimum. The Soviet Union is moving to the same position from the opposite direction, ensuring that all land is at some time during the rotation put under grass.

It would, however, be very superficial to claim that the Soviet Union is "adopting our ley-farming methods", as at first sight it is a little tempting to do. (Ley-farming is the treatment of grass as a crop; planting it as seeds and renewing it after an interval of one or more seasons.) It is true that ley-farming has been practised in Britain, especially in Scotland, the north of

England, and Wales, for many decades, and this fact should mean that the study of Williams and his methods should be of particular fascination for British people. But here it has developed by rule-of-thumb methods, without a scientific basis.

It is this basis that Williams provided; and it is of even greater fundamental significance than shelter belts or genetics.

Williams began with a thoroughgoing materialist study of the soil and its structure. He pointed out that on this depends the behaviour both of water and of organic matter in the soil. In a soil with a "crumb" structure (not "crumble", as misleadingly translated in the *Situation in Biological Science*), i.e. a soil composed of particles from one to ten millimetres in diameter, water moves under the law of gravity. In a structureless (i.e. pulverised) soil it behaves under the law of capillarity, i.e. like water in a porous brick.

The structure of the soil and the moisture in it also determine whether the bacteriological decomposition of organic residues, or of organic material introduced as manure or compost, takes place in the presence or the absence of air, and this has profound effects on the availability of the plant foods produced by the decomposition.

We can sum up by saying that Williams did a highly scientific and materialist investigation into our old friend "humus". We have all heard the countryman's gruff assertion "You can't farm without muck", and have been conscious of his instinct to put back into the soil as much as possible of what comes out of it. All gardeners know that what they like about a "good" soil is its texture and its capacity for holding moisture. Their instinct is a true one, and Williams showed the scientific basis for it. Williams further shows in his book how the introduction of grass into the rotation, along with correct methods of cultivation and many other secondary matters, does preserve the structure and nutrient qualities of the soil, and prevents soil erosion.

Almost as an offshoot Williams early in his book makes a fundamental contribution to economic theory by developing Lenin's attack on the orthodox so-called "law of diminishing returns". Studying the experiments of Hellriegel on the growth of plants and the presence of increasing amounts of water, he shows that the falling-off in yield after a certain point is not caused by the presence of water but by the effect of the water in excluding another factor of plant growth, namely air. He explains the contrasted experiments of Wolny, who showed that the condition for increasing production was the preservation of the optimum proportion between the various factors of plant growth. If one factor was increased then the others had to be increased also, and if this was done there was no limit to productivity. This directly contradicts the basic assumption of the new Malthusianists who are so fashionable today with their call for fewer people as the only alternative to starvation, pestilence and war. Williams did an interesting calculation on the basis of the maximum possible yield of cereals, making use of all the light and heat available from the sun, and arrived at a figure of 160cwt. per acre.

Before leaving his book it is perhaps only right to mention a section in the article by G. V. Jacks, Director of the Commonwealth Bureau of Soil Science, in the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, Vol. X, No. 3. "Williams regards agriculture as a single indissoluble complex—as a kind of machine which transforms the energy of the sun into the food of mankind. The successful agriculturist is he who constructs the most efficient machine and operates it in the most economical manner." This is both contradictory and untrue. Williams did not regard agriculture as any kind of machine. Rather, by starting from its material basis in the constitution of the soil and of plants, by studying their interaction, and by resolutely refusing to isolate them from

their environments and their interactions with their environments, Williams gave an outstanding example of the application of dialectical materialism to a science hitherto struggling in a bog of practicalism.

Shelter Belts

The grandiose scheme of shelter belts, the other aspect of the battle against soil erosion, has become a little better known in this country. It is only necessary to stress the scope of the plan. Besides the vast belts of forest thousands of miles long and consisting mainly of three strips seventy yards wide and 350 yards apart, there are the provisions for the planting of trees by every collective farm, along the smallest streams and around the smallest ponds. The trees act in three ways: by breaking the force of the winds and keeping them away from the soil; by reinforcing the banks of rivers and streams with their roots and preventing the soil being swept away; and in causing alterations in rainfall and climate.

In course of time the new trees will become important sources of timber and of fruit. Provision is also made in the Fifteen-year Plan for the ordinary afforestation of all sandy areas which are not suited to other agricultural use. It is interesting to read the names of the trees chosen for planting in the various districts, so many of them familiar to us in Britain. And it is a very curious thought that in fifteen or twenty years, largely owing to the work of the Russian scientist with the British father, the vast unfamiliar treeless open spaces of the steppes will take on an appearance much more like that of the English countryside, though on a much larger scale and without, probably, the pleasing but inconvenient irregularities of the English scene. It will not only be a matter of the rows and clusters of trees, but also of great fields of fresh green grass.

New Plant and Animal Varieties

While Williams's ideas were being tested experimentally, the collective farmers and the scientists of the USSR were at the same time approaching the problem of increasing production by improving the yield of plants and animals; finding new high-yielding varieties, and finding varieties which could flourish under climatic conditions too severe for known varieties. This is the work which provided the raw material for the great "genetics controversy" associated with Lysenko.

The great mass of practical results has been largely ignored in this country. Lysenko has been presented either as "a peasant with green fingers" or as an upstart suddenly imposed on biologists and the agricultural community by the Communist Party in pursuit of abstract doctrine. In reality the whole controversy has been to ensure that some of the more conservative among laboratory scientists either accepted the theories proved by mass experiment and ordinary practice, or at least stopped obstructing their application.

One of the best pictures of the background of the controversy is contained in the popular booklet *A People's Academy*, by Gennadi Fish. This is an account of the scientific and practical campaign to increase the yield of millet, previously always regarded as a Cinderella among crops. The following extract, from the mouth of an old Kazak collective farmer, gives some idea of its quality.

"Millet is a living thing. . . . It is like a little child that can be trained to become a fearless jigit or a sly mullah. Now I sow it in an irrigated field and give it all the water it asks for. But if I do that year after year it becomes delicate, like an only child, a spoilt child. And at the first difficulty it meets with in life it will wilt and perish. No! I don't want it to become a mollycoddle, but a brave jigit. I do not want to shield my beloved son from the tempest of life by tenderness. Look at these seeds."

He poured some large white millet grains into his palm. "I will send them into the world, among men. After two years of irrigation I will sow them in dry ground. I have reared them, I have given them health and strength, now let them fight their way, let them become steeled, become jigits. And next year I will pick the best of those that will have grown on the dry land and take them to my bosom again, like sons returned from long wandering, and plant them in the irrigated land."

This little book, *A People's Academy*, contains, as well as all its human interest, quite the shrewdest and most devastating exposure of the *Muck and Mysticism* School of Sir Albert Howard and others that has ever appeared. (Pages 111-121). It describes how yields of millet have been increased up to 700-fold. One of the workers has, in fact, on a ten-acre experimental plot, obtained a yield of 160cwt. an acre, almost exactly the theoretical upper limit for the yield of a cereal crop worked out by Williams. Other results include 64cwt. an acre from a 90 acre plot. A pleasing sidelight on the result of this campaign was the discovery that American harvesting machines could not satisfactorily be used for harvesting these crops, because they had not been designed for such heavy yields! A Soviet-designed and produced machine was quickly brought into use and the difficulty overcome.

Another important development, which can be studied in the *Situation in Biological Science*, was the cultivation of winter wheat in Siberia. Some of the earlier work on breeding, such as the celebrated "arctic tomatoes", has become a little better known in this country; and now we have the magnificent *Selected Works* of Michurin, with its enormous wealth of experiments and examples. Nor must it be forgotten that it was the Soviet Union which, long before the war, led the world in the development of artificial insemination as a practical agriculture technique.

All this work depended upon, and in turn helped to advance, the large-scale scientific and mechanised methods of the collective and state farms.

Technical Advances

Being wedded to practice, Williams's work includes detailed treatment of a whole number of technical matters. He insisted strongly on—and succeeded in making the Communist Party and the Government insist on—the use of the fore-plough or skim coulter, an attachment to the plough not by any means universal in this country or in the USA, for the more complete burying of the outer side of the furrow slice.

Probably the most interesting technical matters for British readers are the actual rotations which he worked out to be the basis of the *travopolye* system. He distinguished two main types, the arable rotation and the fodder rotation, associated respectively with the slopes and level grounds, and with the valleys, because of the different water regimes in them. The tops of the watersheds, he insisted, must be afforested. These two rotations form the basis of the *travopolye* system which the Fifteen-year Plan is now making universal throughout the Soviet Union. In the arable rotation grass is left down one year, or not more than two years, and grain crops for five or six. In the fodder rotation grass is down for (rather strictly, it seems) seven years, immediately followed by vegetable and industrial crops for one or two years, followed by grain for three or four. The function of the grass in preserving and improving the structure and fertility of the soil is very clear; details are not yet available of the intended use of the grass, whether for hay, grass drying, or silage.

An interesting point is the bringing in of vegetables on the ordinary farms in the fodder rotation. This has to be done, as in the first year after grass the soil is too rich in nitrogen for corn crops, and also is in a condition to retain the water required by vegetables. It appears therefore that

vegetables in the Soviet Union will become more and more integrated into ordinary farming, a development which will please all those who deprecate undue specialisation. "The grass-arable system uses market gardening as an indispensable link in the chain of agricultural operations." (Williams, p. 131.)

The shelter belts have necessitated new methods of tree planting, described as the "cluster method". Alongside all these innovations, mechanisation has been proceeding; the number of tractors increased by one-fifth during 1948-9 alone. Farmers are able to calculate the optimum density of sowing according to the moisture content of the soil at the sowing season, thus saving seed and improving yield.

Results

We have already referred to the 700-fold increase in the yield of millet, admittedly a poor and neglected crop formerly. Yields of 60 to 80cwt. an acre appeared to have been secured fairly widely on far more than experimental plots; and the record is 160cwt. an acre.

As for wheat, with one of the new "branched" varieties, yields up to 60 to 80cwt. an acre have been obtained; 24.3cwt. an acre of spring wheat has been obtained from large areas. The Stalin Farm obtained 13cwt. an acre of all cereal crops in 1948. These figures must, of course, be compared with the miserable prerevolutionary yields of 3 or 4cwt. an acre, and also with yields in other countries. It is not always realised that yields per acre in Britain are about the highest in the world. Good seasons and bad, our yield of wheat averages about 20cwt. an acre (20.7 in 1948), and of other cereals rather less. But in the classic cereal-producing countries like the USA and Canada, where extensive methods are used, averages are only about 10 bushels an acre.

As the new methods are only now being universally applied, have nowhere been applied for very long, and were interrupted by the war, it is clear that the Soviet yields are moving towards British yields, and seeing that the highest Soviet yields appear to be higher than the highest British yields (the record yield of wheat in Britain is in the region of 80cwt. an acre), will probably catch up with them in the next ten years.

Less information is available for livestock, but champions from the new Kostroma breed of cows have given up to 3,080 gallons in a year. This compares with our record of 3,079.58 (1947).

The following table gives a remarkable picture of the effect of the new methods on a farm where they have been intensively operated.

					<i>Stalin Collective Farm</i>	<i>Salsk District</i>
1.	Area sown to perennial grasses (in acres)	...	...	...	1,784	14,917
	Percentage of ploughland	...	...	...	15%	4.9%
2.	Forest belt area (in acres)	...	...	...	479	6,590
	Percentage of total ploughland	...	...	...	4.1%	2.2%
3.	Cereal crops in 1943 (in cwts.)	...	...	...	9.25	7.09
	" " " 1944 " "	...	...	...	23.03	19.88
	Actual figures 1945 " "	...	...	...	24.21	8.46
	" " 1946 " "	...	...	...	29.13	20.07
	" " 1947 " "	...	...	...	31.88	15.29
	Estimated figures 1948 " "	...	...	...	39.36	31.88
4.	Gross cereal harvest per acre of ploughland (1947) (in cwts.)	...	...	...	16.73	8.46
5.	Gross cereal harvest per able-bodied collective farmer (in cwts.)	...	...	...	112.12	76.75
6.	Money income per acre of ploughland (in rubles)	...	...	...	641	183
7.	Money income per able-bodied collective farmer (in rubles)	...	...	...	4,470	1,656
8.	Milk yield per forage-fed cow (in gallons)	...	...	...	408.48	285.3
9.	Milk yield recalculated per acre of ploughland (in gallons)	...	...	...	9.24	5.72
10.	Wool clip per sheep (in lbs.)	...	...	...	8.82	4.05
11.	Paid in cash per workday unit (in rubles)	...	...	...	5.5	2.33

Particularly interesting are the figures for 1946 and 1947, which support the claim that the *Travopolye* system helps to overcome climatic difficulties. In the bad season of 1947, the Regional yields fell from 8.2 to 6.3, while the Stalin Farm yields rose from 11.8 to 13cwt. per acre.

Having in mind these results, along with the recognised superior productivity of grass-leys over even the best permanent pastures (and few Russian pastures can have been good by our standards), the claim made at the beginning of this article, that the Soviet Union will soon obtain 150% to 200% of its present crops from half the present crop acreage, while the other half produces good grass as a basis for many kinds of animal products, is seen to be abundantly justified.

Social Effects

The effects of these changes on world economy will be too great to deal with in this article. Within the Soviet Union itself, the 15-year Plan will fulfil the prediction and aim of Socialists of all generations, in abolishing the disadvantages of the countryside compared with the towns. It was always recognised that this could not be done immediately, but only on the basis of a technical and scientific revolution. Progress was being steadily made, and in the last adjustment of prices and wages, the standard of living rose 14% for country people compared with 12% for townspeople. Now, the enormous increase in production will provide the basis for complete equality of status. In the last few weeks news has come through of the appearance of the "*agroroã*"—an agricultural city—a grouping of separate collective farms together into a large living unit, in which all modern services can be economically provided. In the Cherkassy District, for example, four separate collective farm villages are being replaced by a "Farm-City" on the banks of the Dnieper, the prototype, it cannot be doubted, of many more.

The rest of the world should study these developments. No country is so advanced, either in agricultural technique or in social organisation, as to have nothing to learn from these vast changes. But the countries that will watch most eagerly are surely India, China and the former and present colonies, where outdated systems of land tenure and the impossibility of employing new techniques have condemned the great majority of the population to terrible poverty all the time, and to periodic disastrous famines.

To justify these conditions, the "backwardness" of agriculture has been accepted as a law of nature; and on it the cruel arguments of the new Malthusianists have been built up. The studies, the researches and the present universal practice of the Soviet Union have destroyed the basis of these theories, and the possibilities of using them to check the aspirations of the people. The work of Williams and Lysenko and their countless thousands of helpers have shown that the world *can* multiply its supplies of food many times over, and feed its people. When there has been time for their work to be finally applied, it may well be that the exceptional strength of the sun in tropical countries, balanced by the proper supplies of water and plant nutriment, will enable these countries to excel the rest of the world in the yields and richness of their agricultural produce.

Is it too much to hope that this great revolution in man's oldest industry, indisputably led by the Soviet Union, may be an additional factor rallying all who are in any way connected with food production to the cause of peace, so that the great work can go on, to the benefit of the peoples of the whole world?

BOOK REVIEWS

MICHURIN AND HUXLEY

SELECTED WORKS of
I. V. Michurin. (*Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1949. 15s.*)

A PEOPLE'S ACADEMY. By
Gennadi Fish. (*Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. 1949. 2s. 6d.*)

SOVIET GENETICS. By J. Huxley.
(*Chatto & Windus, London, 1949. 8s. 6d.*)

THE name of Michurin is now used by Soviet scientists to designate those new theoretical and practical trends in Soviet biology which have been developed by Academician Lysenko and his co-workers. The appearance in English of *Michurin's Selected Works* is therefore particularly welcome as it will enable people in this country to learn something of the man and his work, and of his ideas, and to see how these ideas are related to the most recent developments.

Michurin was indeed a very remarkable man. The quality of his writings is always lucid and attractive and conveys the impression of an outstanding personality. The history of his life, which is the history of his work, confirms this impression. He came of a family of bankrupt petty landowners, and was forced for financial reasons to abandon his plans for further education at the age of seventeen. With characteristic determination he took a job as a goods clerk on the local railway and supported himself in this way for twelve years. At a very early age he had become interested in horticulture, and was inspired with the idea of improving the cultivated fruit plants in Central Russia. To this self-imposed and selfless task he devoted the remainder of his life, working with almost unbelievable industry in the face of poverty and of all the difficulties and frustrations imposed by Tsarist society.

While still working on the railway, he began to build up a small nursery, which eventually became sufficiently self-supporting to enable him to give his whole time to it. He continued to work in these difficult conditions for over 40 years without the slightest help or encouragement from the Tsarist government. His methods were so successful that he acquired a considerable reputation in Russia, and even the U.S. Department of Agriculture were, in 1911, sufficiently interested to try to get him to go to America or at least to sell his best

varieties. Michurin rejected these offers because of his patriotic desire that his work should be of use to his own people. This wish was realised with the establishment of the Soviet Government, which Michurin, who had always been a man of progressive ideas, unhesitatingly welcomed. The Soviet Government recognised the importance of Michurin's work and provided him with funds and assistance for its development. His nursery became the *Michurin Central Genetics Laboratory*, with Michurin as the director of its large staff.

Michurin's concern, throughout his long and busy life, with the practical problems of improving fruit culture in Central Russia made it inevitable that his writings should be cast mainly in instructional form. Nevertheless he was guided throughout by certain theoretical principles which emerge quite clearly, if sometimes almost incidentally, in his works. For the same reason the many experiments he carried out were directed to the solving of practical problems and were not designed for the critical establishment of theoretical principles. But Michurin was always insistent on the need for correct biological theory as a guide in practice.

Michurin's fundamental ideas emerge most clearly in his attitude to adaptation, to the relation between the organism and its environment. He approaches this question in an instinctively dialectical way, recognising as a result of his own experiments and observations in the practical work of fruit breeding that the adaptation cannot be separated from the process of development. He considered that organisms are more plastic and have greater adaptive possibilities in the earliest stages of their development. The way to change heredity, in his opinion, was by means of environmental changes acting on the young developing organism. This is the basis for his belief that growing plants from seed is the best way to get varieties adapted to specific conditions of life. He attached special importance to using hybrid seeds for training, as being more adaptable owing to their "shaken" heredity. These ideas were the foundation of his successes in practice. The theoretical ideas of Lysenko and his followers are clearly a development and extension of Michurin's concepts. In the same way, Michurin's detailed and acute observations on the specific environmental requirements have been developed and given precision in Lysenko's "phasal" theory of plant growth.

Many readers will be interested in Michurin's references to Mendelism. He did not deny the application of the Mendelian laws to many plants, but he did not consider that they had much relevance in his own work with fruit plants. Moreover, Michurin did not believe that the formal genotypic analysis of Mendelism was capable of correctly selecting pairs of plants for crossing. He considered that the biological history of the parents, the environmental conditions to which they had been exposed, were the important factors to be taken into account. This is because in the hybrid the greater influence will be exerted by the parent which is developmentally older or which has had a longer history in particular environmental conditions. By correct selection of pairs for hybridisation in this way, the adaptability of the hybrid plant can be increased and guided into a desired direction. In this connection it is worth pointing out that Michurin did not in general employ mass selection (although of course he did not exclude this method in appropriate cases). In his own work, however, he employed only small numbers of plants, derived from carefully chosen crosses followed by minute attention to the conditions of rearing, to the "training" of the developing seedlings.

It is impossible here to comment on the many features of interest in this book. Michurin employed many bold and interesting methods in his work, such as the use of mixed pollen, vegetative approximation, the use of an intermediary, the use of grafts as mentors. These methods have not only become a part of Soviet practice, but have led to various lines of experimental investigation reflected in recent developments in biological theory in the Soviet Union. The book contains a large number of very interesting observations and much practical detail on methods of fruit culture. Particularly fascinating are Michurin's notes on methods of selection of various seedling fruit trees. It is clear that the current ideas in Soviet biology are closely related to and a development of the fundamental conceptions of Michurin. For this reason the book will be found very valuable to all who wish to understand these developments. It is beautifully produced and well translated, and the material is conveniently arranged to show the development of Michurin's work and thought.

The little book by Gennadi Fish, *A People's Academy*, gives an account of the campaign of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science in 1938 and succeeding years to increase the cultivation and yield of millet in the Soviet Union. This campaign was initiated by the Communist Party and the Soviet Government and was carried out under the leadership of Lysenko. The spectacular increase in millet production which resulted was a not inconsiderable factor in the feeding of the Red Army during the war.

This book is warmly to be recommended. It is not concerned with scientific detail but is a popular and human account of the way in which a particular agronomic problem was tackled and solved. In a graphic and exciting manner the author brings out the way in which science and practical agriculture are linked together in socialist society, and it is fascinating to read how the collective farmers were drawn into a concerted effort with the scientists to gain a victory in the control of nature. To many scientists in Britain this account will provide a vivid and revealing glimpse of the tremendous part science plays in the Soviet Union today, and the way it has become a possession and a tool of the people. After reading this little book one gets a fresh understanding of the importance of the Academy of Agricultural Science in the development of collective farming and of the characteristic methods of work and thought of Academician Lysenko, which have earned him such affection and respect among the Soviet people.

Professor Huxley's book on *Soviet Genetics* is an expanded version of a long article on this subject which he wrote for *Nature*. His aim is to give an account of the genetics controversy in the Soviet Union and to explain its significance to English readers. Unfortunately Professor Huxley's statement of the issues involved is itself based on very serious misapprehensions. For this reason it must be said that his book will prove far from helpful to anyone wishing to understand the questions at issue and is in fact likely to cause considerable confusion in the minds of those unacquainted with the whole background.

A very large part of Huxley's book is devoted to an attack on Lysenko and the Michurinists for their alleged repudiation of the concept of scientific method and scientific activity held by the great majority of men of science elsewhere. The Michurinists are accused of rejecting ascertained scientific facts on the basis of some preconceived doctrine. The basis for these statements by Professor Huxley is Lysenko's rejection of the Mendelian theory of heredity, which Huxley chooses to equate with the facts of modern biology. But it is repeatedly made clear by Lysenko and his followers that they reject none of the facts which have been accumulated by the Mendelians or the Neo-Darwinists: what they reject is the Mendelian *explanation* of these facts. Nor do they reject experiment and scientific method; instead they claim that they have scientific evidence which in their opinion must lead to a rejection of Mendelian theory. Scientists elsewhere are quite entitled to view this evidence critically, but they should be clear that the issue is for Soviet biology a scientific one. It cannot apparently be too clearly emphasised that Lysenko rejects none of the facts of orthodox genetics but only their explanation in

terms of the gene-chromosome theory. The extraordinary confusion which Huxley makes between facts, and the theory intended to explain them, has led him into what is in fact a prolonged tilting at wind-mills, an attack on something that does not exist.

In his treatment of the modern Mendelian gene-chromosome theory of heredity Huxley is not quite fair to his non-scientific readers. Because he himself is convinced of its validity he presents it as if it were established and universally accepted. Yet he cannot be unaware of the exceedingly damaging criticisms of the particulate theory of inheritance that can be, and have been, made by many biologists and philosophers since the theory was first propounded. Whatever advantages may be claimed for a particulate theory of inheritance as a hypothesis to cover experimental facts, the philosophical and scientific difficulties of such a theory are surely too great for it to be considered even by its supporters as more than a convenient approach to a really fundamental treatment of heredity. It is for these reasons that Mendelian theory has always been viewed rather coolly by considerable numbers of Western biologists. Furthermore, Huxley conveys the impression of a much more uniform body of opinion among orthodox geneticists than actually exists. There are in fact more discordant voices within the orthodox chorus than are consistent with the harmony Huxley wishes to present for our admiration. There can be no doubt, however, that Huxley's blindness to the weaknesses of Mendelian theory have led him to do less than justice to the weight of Lysenko's attack.

The confusion which Huxley makes between Mendelian theory and scientific fact leads him into further difficulties when he tries to account for the decision of the Soviet Academy of Sciences to reject Mendelism and to base teaching and research on Michurinist theory. Since to him Mendelism is equivalent to science, he regards this decision as non-scientific and therefore seeks for some non-scientific reason for its adoption. Thus he says: "The next question was, why had Lysenko won his battle and how was it possible for the Academy of Sciences to have lent their scientific authority to the suppression of an entire branch of science? The conclusion is inescapable that this has been done on ideological grounds, under political pressure, although the precise reasons why political and ideological pressure has been so forcibly exerted are not altogether clear." It is naturally very difficult to explain why Soviet scientists or the Soviet Government should adopt for non-scientific reasons an unscientific theory which would be likely to lead to disaster when applied to agriculture, and Huxley's endeavours to provide such an explanation are unconvincing in the extreme.

But all these involved speculations are unnecessary once it is realised that the Academy's decision was a scientific one. In their opinion, which, of course, many Western scientists do not share, Michurinist genetics is likely to be more helpful in solving the problems of collective agriculture than is Mendelism. After all, the most urgent problem facing Soviet society at the present time is the most rapid possible increase in agricultural production. Nor are there in the Soviet Union any of the social conflicts, characteristic of capitalist society, that can make a good harvest into a disaster. It is surely therefore ridiculous to suppose that the Soviet Government or the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would for obscure and unspecified political reasons support a scientific policy which they knew to be without foundation. The facts are clear and straightforward. Michurinism was adopted as the leading biological theory replacing Mendelism because it was believed to be better as a scientific theory on the scientific evidence accumulated in the course of some twenty years of collective agriculture. That is the attitude of the majority of Soviet scientists and of the Soviet Government, and that is the simple explanation of recent events in the Soviet Union.

Naturally many Western scientists will disagree with the new genetic theories, but they will have to understand them, and they will not be able to do this unless they are clear about the real issues involved. It is unfortunate that this book is only likely to make those issues more confused. As far as the Soviet people are concerned the issue is fundamentally a scientific one, although it is recognised to be fraught with social consequences of the utmost importance. They believe that the new approach to genetics will prove more fruitful in theory and in practice and will materially assist in the strengthening and advance of socialist society.

A brief review is not the place to attempt to give, as Huxley has failed to do, a considered account of Lysenko's ideas. It appears, however, that these ideas are both penetrating and fundamental and will have to be approached with more seriousness and objectivity than some Western scientists have been able to assume. There appears, for example, to be much more experimental evidence inconsistent with Mendelism, from both Soviet and Western sources, than is referred to in this book, and it is disappointing that Professor Huxley did not give more space to a critical consideration of these facts and less to the repetition of baseless allegations concerning the fate of certain Soviet geneticists. Such allegations are, rightly, deeply resented by Soviet scientists and can do great harm to the cause of friendship and understanding between the Soviet people and ourselves.

ALAN MORTON.

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION: A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL FACTORS AND TRADITIONS.

By Nicholas Hans, Ph.D., D.Litt.
(Routledge & Kegan Paul, 21s.)

AN immense amount of reading and research has obviously gone into the production of this book, a volume in the *International Library of Sociology and Reconstruction* series. Dr. Hans is to be congratulated on the frankness with which he links education with politics and religion both in the past and today.

We are here concerned only with those chapters and references that relate to the USSR. Dr. Hans has travelled a long way from his early hostility to the Soviet Union. His honesty and friendliness to the USSR make him give full recognition in the book, as in the lecture room, to that country's great educational achievements. The criticism that may justly be levelled against the sections in question arises partly from his historical and contemporary interpretation, and partly from the fact that Dr. Hans does not appear to have had access to the latest or the full Soviet publications on education.

Dr. Hans rightly demolishes the legend created by some people that there was no education in pre-revolution Russia. He shows how in fact Russia was one of the earliest countries to have free state education, but the absence of any figures on the extent of this education gives a completely wrong impression and must make the reader wonder how then it was possible for Russia to have such a high rate of illiteracy in 1914.

It is a little ingenuous to say (p. 309): "The Soviet Government accepted the ideals of the radical Russian intelligentsia and in 1918 established a democratic *école unique* ('unified labour school' in Russian)." The Soviet Government accepted Marxist principles of education, not always in line with those of the radical Russian intelligentsia. The Soviet *educationists* of the time, not synonymous with the Soviet *government*, accepted American educational theories and ignored progressive Russian educationists such as Ushinsky for many years.

Not all High Education Institutes are maintained as well as controlled by the Ministry for Higher Education. Educational control rests with the latter, but maintenance is in the hands of the relevant ministries or sometimes of regional sections of an industry, as with the coal industry in the Donbas. Autonomous Republics as well as Union Republics have their Ministries of Education. Compulsory education is from seven to seventeen, not fifteen. So far only Georgia, Latvia and Estonia have extended the course till eighteen. Several statements on pp. 311/312 need bringing up to date or correcting.

There are not three *kinds* of general school. There are three *stages* or *grades* of the one kind of general school. Grade 1, primary, is from seven to ten; grade 2, incomplete secondary, or seven-year, school from seven to fourteen; and grade 3, secondary, or ten-year, school from seven to seventeen. The explanation of the three grades is geographical and economic. Sparseness of population in many rural areas makes anything more than a four-form school out of the question. The former economic backwardness and the present over-all reconstruction and development needs do not as yet allow of ten-year schools everywhere. In 1949/50 all children leaving class 4 in the primary school (the few exceptions are due to local inefficiency) went on to class 5 either in new classrooms added to the primary school or in new seven-year schools. Thirty per cent, not four per cent, pass into the upper forms of the ten-year school. Exactly the same general education is given to pupils in secondary, vocational and technical schools as in the general secondary schools. Further, as Dr. Hans mentions, the same secondary general education is now provided for young people in industry and agriculture, at special courses given by the factory or farm, in the morning, afternoon or evening according to the work.

It is obvious from p. 314 that Dr. Hans has not been to the Soviet Union to see education for himself since he left the country in the early twenties, and knows nothing of the transformation in schools, in teachers and in the attitudes of the local communities. It is confusing to say "the Soviet practice [is] in line with the break at eleven-plus in England and France" (p. 312). The break, or selection, in the Soviet Union is at fourteen, not before. Military training (p. 316) was abolished in 1946 except for two hours a week, for boys in classes 8 and 9 in the full secondary school, that is just over five per cent, not eleven per cent, of the time. The policy of free higher education for all and the abolition of examinations was not due to misguidedness (p. 319); it was the result of a well-thought-out deliberate policy. Changing conditions, the success of the Five Year Plan among them, brought about a change in 1932.

With a little more care in checking facts, and a better interpretation, the valuable information the book offers on Soviet education would have been more valuable still.

BEATRICE KING

THE SOVIET AIR FORCE. By Asher Lee. (Duckworth, 8s. 6d.)

ANY book written by a foreigner about the Soviet Air Force is bound to be speculative rather than factual, for the simple reason that, as the author of this one points out, secrecy with regard to her armaments

is one of the Soviet Union's "major weapons of defence", which has been, and still is, "worth many fighter squadrons to her Air Force". As a senior Air Ministry intelligence officer during the last war, however, Mr. Asher Lee has had more opportunity than most men of acquiring factual knowledge of the subject on which he has written, and the claim made on the wrapper, that his book "is based firmly on an informed study of the facts", is a fair one.

An important conclusion which the author has reached is that the Soviet High Command has always regarded the Air Arm in much the same way as artillery or tanks are generally regarded, as a tactical weapon for the support of ground (or sea) forces. For this reason the Soviet Union has not worked on the idea of an Independent Air Force, for purposes of strategic bombing, as has been done by Britain and, more recently, by the United States. He suggests, however, that she may do this "when her stock-pile of atom bombs is beginning to reach wartime proportions", but in so doing would appear to be ignoring the massive evidence adduced by Professor P. M. S. Blackett, F.R.S., in his book *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, to show that she is unlikely to be so foolish. His own statement on page 194, that "at the moment the Soviet Air Force has no long-range bomber which can carry the atomic bomb more than 1,000 miles from base", and the map facing it, which shows that Soviet bases are much farther away from North American Continental target areas than are the actual and prospective forward bases of the U.S. Air Forces from Russian targets, would seem, moreover, to bear significantly on this matter.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is Chapter V, which answers the question which must be puzzling many people, of why the Soviet Union, which in the early 1930's was the pioneer in the development of the use of air-borne troops, made so little use of them in the Second World War. Inadequacy of material may have accounted for this in part, but the main reasons, Mr. Asher Lee suggests, were that "the war against Germany had taught the Red Army High Command that air-borne troops were vulnerable, expensive to train and to operate", and that "*the Soviet war machine had no room for the luxurious and inept expenditure of men which was so typical of the Tsar's armies in the 1914-18 War*". This seems to dispose of one of the favourite explanations in British military (and pseudo-military) circles of how it was that the Soviet Army got to Berlin first!

Interesting facts revealed are the following. On page 170 the author writes, in explanation of the comparative unsuccess of Soviet long-range bombing against the

Germans, that "the Soviet long-range bomber force flew throughout the war without the efficient friendliness of radar aids". One might reasonably have assumed that knowledge of these, including that of IFF (Identification, Friend or Foe), so invaluable in night fighting, would have been imparted to the Soviet Union by her British and American Allies. In fact, though, they were very tardily acquired by the Soviet Union through the fortuitous circumstance of the landing on her territory of three American Superfortresses which had been raiding Japan. These were, incidentally, not "retained as booty", as Mr. Asher Lee writes, but were "interned", because the Soviet Union was not yet at war with Japan at that time. Knowledge of IFF was acquired only by capture from the Germans. These facts throw a different light on the post-war Canadian "spy trials", at which, according to Mr. Asher Lee, "radar was one of the main targets of the Communist information-seekers". The other fact can be stated more briefly. It is that with the coming of jet planes high-octane fuel, the adequate production of which still presents a problem to the Soviet Union, is not so important.

More careful, or more competent, proof reading would have eliminated occasional errors in quotation of Russian and in the transcription of Russian names, but these are unimportant.

EDGAR P. YOUNG, R.N.

OBLOMOV. By Ivan Alexandrovich Goncharov. Translated by Natalie Duddington. (*Dent, No. 878 in Everyman's Library, 4s. 6d.*)

IT IS just over a hundred years since *The Dream of Oblomov* first appeared in Russian, so the present English reprint is especially fitting and welcome. Welcome, because this is the only translation of the book we have.

Oblomov is one of those classics of Russian literature that can particularly help us to an understanding of Russian history and culture in perspective. Oblomov himself is the epitome of the so-called "superfluous man". He and his inevitable counterpart, Zahar, are still, if rapidly receding, the objects of wit and satire in the Soviet Union. *Oblomov*, every time we read it, prods at our own weak spots. There are in Britain today a great many more Oblomovs, with that same inimitable manner he had of facing facts, than there were one hundred years ago. Exchange a dressing-gown for a suburban house and garden, the bailiff's letters and the notices to quit for the daily newspaper headlines, and the country estate for domains farther afield—and there you have us! "*Oblomov* is a challenge," wrote Dobrolyubov when the complete work first appeared in 1859, "a challenge to struggle for new forms of life."

It is unfortunate that the only translation we possess should be inadequate in its dialogue, on which so much depends. The translator, well able to render the straightforward prose passages, is not at home in colloquial English. She is, moreover, inconsistent in her colloquial abbreviations, which is disturbing to the reader, and too often she fails to render the full force of the Russian emphatic particle and idiom. These have a bearing on both atmosphere and character. While paying her, and other stalwart translators, tribute for performing a great and much-needed service, we must ask ourselves if it is not time to get down to some collective work on translation as the solution to many of the problems which beset this difficult art. E.H.

THE FACTORY. By Vera Panova.
(Putnam, 9s. 6d.)

LIKE *The Train*, Vera Panova's new book has as its subject a community. The people in her novel are united not by any plot but by the factory in which they work. They make the factory and the factory makes them. The two-way relationship is important. In most novels with comparable subjects written in the capitalist world (for instance Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, B. Traven's *The Death Ship*, James Hanley's *Miner*) the overwhelming sense is of the men and women of the story being conditioned and limited by their environment. In *The Factory* the overriding impression is that of men and women controlling their destiny. The factory is not a grim impersonal force over which people have no power and which therefore shapes them to its will; on the contrary it is they who shape the factory.

Hence not only the sense of social energy which we get from the novel but also the vitality of the individual characters. It is a paradox that most of our critics are unable to explain. Vera Panova's novels are quoted as odd exceptions in Soviet life—how queer that this writer, who is obviously a loyal Soviet citizen, should yet be interested in individuals! And how vivid and forthright these people are! Can it really be true that a trade union branch chairman (for of course we know that trade unions in Russia are servile organs of the State) criticises the factory director to his face, or that this factory director—on the whole a sympathetic and effective character and a respected communist—should also be revealed as pompous and boastful?

Vera Panova's characters are never idealised. The best of them have their weaknesses (not just amiable weaknesses but real ones); the stresses and strains of personal relationships are never underplayed. And one is struck again and again by an emotional maturity, a deeply achieved sense of proportion which makes our contemporary pedlars in the murkier labyrinths of Original Sin seem, for all their sophistication, rather adolescent. It is true

that in *The Factory* there is no incest, homosexuality, schizophrenia, rape or murder. It is true too that the most advanced neurosis revealed (that, incidentally, of the trade union chairman) is dealt with rather summarily with the advice that the sufferer should go and see a doctor. But I do not think that anyone would seriously maintain that life is presented in an unduly rosy light. Indeed the dominant impression is of struggle, difficulty, and almost incredibly hard work.

Vera Panova's novels are perhaps especially valuable to the foreign reader simply because they portray so vividly and in such human terms what life in the Soviet Union is like. There is no need to make exaggerated claims for *The Factory*. No one is going to maintain that it is one of the Twenty Great Novels of the World. But it is an interesting novel, an intelligent novel, a serious novel: in short a good novel.

ARNOLD KETTLE.

ON THE EVE. By I. S. Turgenev.
Translated from the Russian
by Gilbert Gardiner. (Penguin
Classics, 1s. 6d.)

"YES, it's youth and glory and courage. It's life and death, struggle, defeat and triumph, love, liberty and fatherland! How fine, how fine! God grant everyone as much! That's not like sitting up to your neck in a bog and taking up an attitude of indifference, when in point of fact you don't care anyway."

The theme of Turgenev's great novel is commanding and simple. A Bulgarian revolutionary patriot who devotes his whole life to his country falls in love with a Russian girl of aristocratic birth. Elena is a natural, vital being and so comes to love him that she spurns the intolerant, effete society in which she has been reared, marries him and, after his tragic death, devotes her life to his cause. The book still has a message for us to this day. This should be stressed, if only because Mr. Gardiner asserts in his preface that the political and sociological aspect of Turgenev's work is "only of minor significance". It would be hard to read Chapter XXX, from which our initial quotation is taken, without being moved by its aptness today.

"The need for people of consciously heroic nature . . . to advance the cause" was said by Turgenev to be the idea behind the novel, and large numbers of progressive young Russians in the 'sixties actually sought to follow the example of Insarov and Elena. Turgenev's artistic achievement is inseparable from the idea and purpose of his novel.

Turgenev when he wrote *On the Eve* stood on the brink, between the old and the new. After the "Emancipation" his attitude crystallised and he quit the company of the revolutionary intelligentsia. He

was too great an artist not to portray the truth as he saw it, and if there was any maliciousness in his later portrait of Bazarov (in *Fathers and Sons*) it lay in his choice of prototype, which gave a certain unfair twist to the typical revolutionary it was taken to represent. But there is already more than a hint in Insarov (in *On the Eve*) that the new hero is incapable of appreciating art and nature. Such a shortcoming might have been true of Pisarev, but certainly not of Chernishevsky, Dobrolyubov and their followers.

Turgenev was the artist of his epoch not merely in reflecting it as it was, but in interpreting, despite himself, its future and its needs. Elena and Insarov were part of his response to those needs, and it is this that lies at the root of the greatness of the book and makes Turgenev live for us today.

Turgenev's fine use of epithet and simile, the rhythm, musicality and poetry of his prose make it exceedingly difficult to render in English. This provides justification for the freer method of translation preferred by Mr. Gardiner, who has given us throughout extremely readable English of a high standard. If much of Turgenev is sheer poetry, it must be re-created rather than translated; in this Mr. Gardiner has largely succeeded. His descriptive passages, especially the famous one on Venice, are particularly fine. In following this course, however, there is always the danger of forsaking an original subtlety for a tempting English substitute, and Mr. Gardiner does not escape this fault. In certain instances the dialogue could stand some careful revision. We are fortunate, though, that translator and publisher have combined to produce such an excellent edition at so moderate a price.

E.H.

THE SPIRIT OF RUSSIAN ECONOMICS. By J. F. Normano. (Dennis Dobson, 8s. 6d.)

ALTHOUGH it is not well named, for it has little to do with technical economics and ranges rapidly through the modern history of Russian sociological thinking, and although it scarcely achieves its intention, declared in the foreword to be "a genetic investigation of the topic, a lesson in depth", yet this book is to be welcomed as providing an interesting introduction to an important subject, as doing it with sanity when so many fail to look at it without passion, and perhaps in particular for underlining the fact that "the idea of Russian cultural isolation is a myth in the field of economics".

The book surveys sociological thought in Russia from the end of the eighteenth century to the time of the Revolution, and says something of English, French and German thought as well as "the native currents". A good deal of the material is familiar. There are interesting sidelights

such as the visit of the Grand Duke Nicholas to Robert Owen at New Lanark and his attempt to persuade Owen to emigrate to Russia. Neither is the book without its insights: when it says that "Russian socialism became a mass phenomenon", it penetrates its whole secret.

There are mistakes. To say (p. 6) that Russian literature is not aware of foreign ideas on Russian soil is nonsense. The idea (p. 18) that "the English Society for the Discovery of Foreign Lands" in the sixteenth century "formed a Russian Company" is wrong. The Society not quite accurately referred to was the Russia Company. The derivation of this false idea from a book on Scott: *an Influence in Russian History* is quaint. Bulgakov (p. 62) did not become a monk in France; neither did Bechelyaev (p. 62), at the time referred to, "preach a return to the Middle Ages". Marx (p. 64) was not "hostile towards Russian revolutionaries".

Two further points need to be noted. The omission of Hechner's *Russian Sociology* from the bibliography is a little surprising, and "Smithianism" for the following of Adam Smith is not English at all: it is an outrage.

STANLEY EVANS.

STUDIES IN EUROPEAN REALISM. A Sociological Survey of the Writings of Balzac, Stendhal, Zola, Tolstoy, Gorki and others. By George Lukács. Translated by Edith Bone. Foreword by Professor Roy Pascal. (London: Hillway Publishing Co., 21s.)

THE EPIC OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE. From its origins through Tolstoy. By Marc Slonim. (New York: Oxford University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. \$5.00 or 25s.)

GEORGE LUKÁCS, after long years spent in Berlin and subsequently in Moscow, returned to Hungary in 1945, where he became Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Budapest. His works are practically unknown to the English reader, although students of Goethe speak highly of a recent book published in German. The studies under review were made rather more than ten years ago; and they form a very remarkable survey of realism in the European novel. The opening essays deal with two works of Balzac; then follows a comparison of Balzac and Stendhal, the two greatest French realists; and there is a brief consideration of Zola, which enables Professor Lukács to distinguish clearly between realism and naturalism, the classical and decadent forms of the same tendency. The remainder of the book is devoted to Tolstoy and Gorky, and they

are introduced, very fittingly, with an essay on "The International Significance of Russian Democratic Literary Criticism". Far too little is known over here of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, though recently some essays by the first and last of the three have become available in English translations from the Soviet State Publishing House. Lukács says rightly that there is a great deal to be learnt from these three critics. Time has revealed the defects of Arnold, Sainte-Beuve and Taine. But these great Russians have, if anything, grown in stature. Their ideas and methods are still active, as is indeed evident from Lukács's own work.

The most interesting essays are perhaps the long one on Tolstoy and another on Gorky's "Human Comedy". The former is especially valuable, since there is scope for a fuller investigation of Tolstoy than seems to have been attempted even by Soviet critics. Professor Lukács adds a stimulating account of Tolstoy's influence on the West, clarifying this whole problem of influence in a masterly way. He writes very well on Gorky, raising and dealing with a number of intricate questions.

It is regrettable that these studies should be presented in a translation which badly needs looking through. There are too many misprints and slipshod phrases; and the price seems too high.

Professor Slonim's work is the first of two volumes, and the second will bring the history of Russian literature to the present day. He speaks in his foreword of the "glaring shortcomings" of most studies of this kind in English: they pay no heed to the work of Soviet scholars during the last three decades. The merit of Professor Slonim's book is that it makes the broadest and most objective survey of Russian literature yet to be found in English. He gives no bibliography, but mentions "about a thousand items for the first volume". His presentation is founded upon the best Soviet studies of recent years, and neither the occasional shadow of Merezhkovsky nor a leaning towards Freudian hypotheses (usually put aside) prevents the work from being useful and informative. There are minor slips (Methodus for Methodius, the number of Pushkin's children, the year of Lermontov's death, and so on), but the fabric is sound, and Professor Slonim shows sympathy and insight. He is better on Pushkin or Goncharov than on Belinsky: indeed, the account of Belinsky is disappointing. While he acknowledges the "crying need" for more information about Russian critics, his own treatment of them is somewhat too meagre.

Anyone who turns to the list of English translations at the end of the book will be disappointed. It is deplorable how many good writers have to be passed over in silence. Professor Slonim's history, in the hands of a reader without Russian, will often be tantalising. What we need more

than anything else just now are monographs and translations—monographs by people who have investigated their subject as thoroughly as this scholar has done, and translations by people who know Russian and can write English.

HENRY GIFFORD.

CHARACTERS OF DOSTOEVSKY (Studies from Four Novels). By Richard Curle. (*William Heinemann Ltd.*, 12s. 6d.)

MR. CURLE claims for his book that it fills a gap in Dostoevskian criticism. He sets out "to analyse with a wealth of detail . . . six leading characters from each of Dostoevsky's four most famous novels, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Possessed*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Each group of six is prefaced by an essay on the novel to which they belong, which is intended to "deal with the spirit of the book . . ."

The result of compressing such a wealth of material into 220 brief pages is to produce something in the nature of a catalogue. The sections are certainly packed with detail, so much so as to make the language frequently stilted, though there are passages that reveal a clearer perspective, as in the case of that on Madame Stavrogin. The book is, in the main, a compact summary of what we can glean from Dostoevsky himself with a quantity of well-chosen quotations. But is this the main task of literary criticism?

Mr. Curle is determined to maintain the legend of the mysterious, incomprehensible Russian "soul". This and his subjection of psychological problems to a purely aesthetic yardstick prevent him from adding to our understanding of the characters. Moreover, the author is at pains to make it clear that he is not concerned with Dostoevsky as a man, but as a writer, and that the former is a subject for the literary historian and not for the critic. He almost completely ignores the social and historical background in which the author lived and creation. In a four- to five page essay he dis-sophical ideas as irrelevant to his artistic creation. In a four- to five-page essay he dis-poses of *The Brothers Karamazov* as being too full of the author's ideas and as evidence of a decline in his artistic powers.

When he does step outside his self-prescribed artistic limits Mr. Curle produces some strange generalisations: "character", he concludes, "remains unchanged by experience, however bitter and disillusioning. . . ." On reaching the author's scurrilous, if brilliant, novel, *The Possessed*, he dauntlessly quits his ivory tower to mobilise Dostoevsky for the cold war.

If we are to add to our understanding of Dostoevsky's characters and their peculiar psychological features a more comprehensive approach is essential.

E.H.

ALEXANDER I OF RUSSIA. By
L. L. Strakhovsky. (*Williams &
Norgate*, 16s.)

PETER THE GREAT AND
THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE. By
B. H. Sumner, (*Basil Blackwood*,
6s.)

THESE two books lie at the poles of historical writing: they are the penny plain and the twopenny coloured. And since Mr. Strakhovsky is likely, unfortunately, to attract ten readers to Mr. Sumner's one, it is with the coloured that I propose to deal first.

The general lines of Alexander's life are well enough known: he became Tsar in 1801 after the murder of his father, Paul I. He led the coalition against Napoleon that culminated in the Moscow campaign and the battle of Leipzig, and was the instigator of the Holy Alliance. He progressed from being the pupil of the Republican La Harpe to becoming the protector and dupe of the unspeakable Arakcheyev.

Mr. Strakhovsky riots through all this with the assurance of a third-rate historical novelist. One specimen should be enough. After describing a great review of the Russian army near Chalons, to which Alexander invited the allied monarchs, Mr. Strakhovsky continues: "Still under the powerful influence of this significant pageant, the sovereigns present at the review were invited by Alexander to affix their signatures to the famous document subsequently known to history as the Holy Alliance. By this document the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia formally declared that henceforth their united policy had but a single object: To manifest before the whole universe their unshakable determination to take as their sole guide, both in the administration of their respective states and in their political relations with other governments, the precepts of religion, namely the rules of Justice, Christian Charity and Peace." (pp. 167-8).

This, apart from a passing comment that "it was obvious that even before applying the ideas of the Holy Alliance to his relations with other countries, Alexander was determined to make them the guiding principles of his rule over Russia", is literally all that Mr. Strakhovsky has to say about the Holy Alliance. Possibly it is as well that he does not record Alexander's famous threat that he would carry through his scheme for imposing a highly unpopular form of military serfdom "even if this meant paving with dead bodies all the road from Petersburg to Chudovo", since he might have found it difficult to determine whether this came under the heading of Justice, of Christian Charity, or of Peace.

He is equally instructive about the campaign of 1812, the Decembrists and, for that matter, about every other important question in the period with which he pur-

ports to deal. Serious criticism of writing at this level is, I think, hardly necessary or even possible.

Mr. Sumner's book is a very different matter. It is a brief but highly compressed account of the relations between Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire, overflowing with facts and obviously the result of considerable research. It is a book which historians working in this field are likely to find permanently useful, though its appeal to the lay reader is perhaps not great.

It deals with a side of Peter's activities which has not up to now attracted very great attention, probably because little immediate result was achieved. The age of Peter was that in which the Ottoman Empire, having reached its high water mark, began to retreat before the European counter-offensive. In that offensive Peter joined, but without conspicuous success. The main reasons for this seem to have been his preoccupation with the struggle against Sweden, and the fact that the steppe lands of the Ukraine were still unabsorbed and formed a wide neutral zone across which military operations on a big scale were hardly possible. It was not till the Ukraine had been settled and its rich soil broken for wheat that Russia and Turkey came fully to grips. And it was the large-scale production of wheat that made the establishment of ports on the Black Sea and the control of its outlet so important.

However, if Peter's offensive was premature, it set the line of policy which Russian Tsarism was to follow for two centuries, and it was Peter, also, who began the systematic exploitation of the perfectly genuine grievances of the Balkan peoples in the interests of Russian Imperialism. Mr. Sumner's book, therefore, is to be welcomed as an introduction to a topic of some importance, and all the more welcomed because he notably refrains from the all-too-common type of generalisation which tries to insinuate that Soviet policy today is merely a continuation of Tsarist policy in a new form. A.L.M.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHESS. By
M. Botvinnik, translated by
Stephen Garry. (*MacGibbon &
Kee*, 12s. 6d.)

SOME time ago English chess players were thrilled by the announcement that a book by the world champion was being translated into English; now that the volume has appeared, it fully justifies their expectations. *Championship Chess* is an account of the great match tournament played in 1941 between the six leading Soviet masters to decide the absolute championship of the USSR. It was first published in Moscow in 1947 and is, as Botvinnik says in his foreword, "the result of three years study". The production is well worthy of the

labour expended on it. I have never seen notes to compare with Botvinnik's for lucid evaluation of critical positions, appreciation of strategic strength or weakness, and ruthless exposure of analytical errors. They bring home to one with almost frightening clarity the true greatness of chess. As one traces the number of opportunities missed by six of the greatest players in the world, one recognises more than ever the truth of the saying by a great master: "It is a mistake to call us masters. No one will ever be master of chess. It is the game itself that is the master."

Yet despite their profundity these notes are never dull or unintelligible. While the expert can learn much from them, they are so clearly expressed that the mere tyro will find them easy to understand. I particularly like the world champion's comments on his own games, which are marked by a spirit of self-criticism—a refreshing change from some writers who seem only concerned with impressing on the reader the depth and accuracy of their own calculations. Botvinnik, on the other hand, takes the student completely into his confidence and one can almost share his own hopes and fears as the struggle develops. There are also some vivid accounts of the tournament scene, and one or two humorous touches, proving that even so tense a tournament as this is not without its lighter side. This is a book which no chess player can afford to miss.

WILLIAM WINTER

MARX: HIS TIME AND OURS.

By Rudolf Schlesinger. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 30s.)

PROFESSOR Schlesinger sets out to examine Marxism critically from the standpoint of an ideal science of society which does not in fact actually exist. And by Marxism he means not only the theory and practice of Marx and Engels, but that of its derivations up to and including especially Lenin, Stalin, and the USSR.

He starts with the assumption that Marx and Engels made a highly commendable endeavour to establish a science of society, and did succeed in expressing with broad accuracy the nature and trends of the society of their day. He concludes with the conviction that Lenin, Stalin, and the USSR do stand in the right line of development from Marx, that they have in fact continued, enlarged and developed the science he founded, and that all assertions to the contrary are unwarranted. He adds as a sort of postscript that while Marx may fairly be compared to Newton he may have to wait quite a time before he finds his Einstein.

All this, so far, is interesting and useful enough; but unfortunately Rudolf Schlesinger's professional bias will not let him rest satisfied with anything so simple as this. He is convinced on *a priori*

grounds that Marx just must have carried over from the past all sorts of "unscientific" Utopian imaginings, and he sets to work to track them down and stick pins in them. The result is very like those theological disputations satirised in Butler's *Hudibras*:

"As if theology had catch'd

The itch on purpose to be scratch'd".

He gets into a most unholy tangle over the Marxist concept of crises, and all because he forgets to distinguish between a simple primary crisis on the plane of the circulation of commodities and the ultimate over-all crisis towards which bourgeois society is always approximating.

On any normally fair-minded reading it is obvious that neither form of crisis can be conceived apart from developing historical circumstances, that in each form the crisis will occur as an emergent phenomenon with "difference and opposition"; so that, again, a rigid mathematical formula is precisely what the Marxian concept excludes. Schlesinger is inclined to blame Marx for this; but he concedes in effect that it may be the fault of the Universe.

Professor Schlesinger makes a great to-do over the "failure" of Marx to supply any exact definition of the concept "class." But it is noteworthy that he fails to quote or to comment upon the passage in his *Eighteenth Brumaire* in which (*à propos* the French peasantry) Marx gets as near as one can wish to an exact definition. Consequently Professor Schlesinger fails entirely to grasp either the profundity or the force of the Marxian concept of the historical transformation of the "class" from a mere descriptive category into an integrated, objective unity able to express itself through the instrumentality of its own distinctive political party and programme.

The whole beauty of the Marxian concept of the proletariat becoming progressively, through "prolonged struggles transforming circumstances and men", developed to a point at which it is in operative fact the "nucleus of the new society developed within the womb of the old", is quite lost on Professor Schlesinger.

That is why he finds relics of pre-Marxian Utopianism in the concepts of the "withering away of the State" and of the disappearance of the distinction between "mental" and "physical" labour.

In the first case Professor Schlesinger muddles together two radically distinct things—the historically evolved central directing authority (which existed already in kinship society) and the "public power of coercion" divorced from control by the mass of the population, which is the characteristic of the class-divided State. That the central directing authority, in any one of a series of permutations, is compatible with the most highly developed Communism is self evident.

But it is not in itself "the State". And as for the "division of labour"—it is not the differentiation of function inseparable from all team-work that Marx and Engels condemned. It was the "slavish, life-long subordination to that kind of division of labour which is inseparable from a class-divided society based upon exploitation" that they wished to do away with. Professor Schlesinger could reflect with profit upon Engels's retort to Dühring—"he hasn't the wit to see that the whole object of Communism is to do away with barrow-pushing as a full-time occupation." T.A.J.

BUILDING A CHARACTER. By K. Stanislavski. (Reinhardt & Evans, 15s.)

STANISLAVSKY ON THE ART OF THE STAGE. Translated by David Magarshack. (Faber & Faber, 25s.)

STANISLAVSKY had a nice device for representing an Englishman. You take a handkerchief and dry the inside of your upper lip. See it is quite dry, then push up the lip, exposing the teeth. You will find your lip stays in its new position, and your voice and face are changed more than you would expect. Strongly recommended as a parlour trick, though unflattering to us English.

Building a Character, which is described as a continuation of *An Actor Prepares*, is for the most part on this practical level. It is about make-up, costume, and all the means of physical characterisation, but it regains some of the old subtlety in later chapters on what Stanislavsky calls "tempo-rhythm". It has the same lively form as the earlier work, Tortsov is still busy with his students, and their marked characters keep the sessions swinging along. It is not so profound as *An Actor Prepares*, it lacks that athletic approach to imagination, but I think most admirers of the main work will want to put this one beside it.

Its origins are obscure. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood, the American editor and translator, speaks of "manuscripts" being received in fragmentary form from Russia in 1940, and more fully after the war. She mentions no edition in Russian, and seems to have put the book together herself.

Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage consists of a set of lectures Stanislavsky delivered in the "studio" of the Bolshoy Theatre between 1918 and 1922, taken down in shorthand by one of the students. This naturally makes for heavier going, and the famous system does not seem to have been quite articulate in the 20's. David Margarshack, who translates, adds a long and well-informed introduction, and a couple of appendices.

MONTAGU SLATER.

READY JULY 1

A World Ahead

by

Jack Lindsay

A detailed account of some weeks spent in the Soviet Union during June-July 1949 at the Pushkin celebrations and then in Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad and Kiev. The book is written in diary form and gives the immediate impressions of life in the Soviet Union; particularly cultural life. Here is a work which enables the reader to get inside that cultural life and to understand from first hand material what is happening there.



Fore Publications

28/29 Southampton Street
London, W.C.2

ALL AND EVERYTHING. By G. Gurdjieff. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 30s.)

IF one concentrated upon neat gin exclusively for a fortnight and then read without stopping Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and the *Book of Mormon*, one would feel pretty much as Gurdjieff must have felt in finding it imperative to get delivered of this book. It is characteristic that this "objectively impartial criticism" of Beelzebub's Tales To His Grandson has its preface at its tail end. From this we gather that if one dives sufficiently deep into one's inner consciousness, one might, with luck, get hold of something, which, if one tugged at it hard enough, might lift one over the moon. But why, in Beelzebub's name, anyone should want to, deponent sayeth not. T.A.J.

BOOKS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

- ADVANCED RUSSIAN CONVERSATION. By E. Kany and A. Kaun. *Harrap (D. C. Heath)*, 5s.
- A GENTLE CREATURE, AND OTHER STORIES. By F. Dostoevsky. *John Lehmann (Chiltern Library)*, 8s. 6d.
- A PROVINCIAL LADY. By I. Turgenev. *Samuel French*, 2s.
- CARP. By E. Fedin. *Methuen's Russian Texts*, 2s. 3d.
- CHARACTER ASSASSINATION. By J. Davis. *Philosophical Library, New York*, \$3.00.
- CHEKHOV IN MY LIFE. By L. Avilov. *John Lehmann*, 10s. 6d.
- CHINESE-RUSSIAN RELATIONS. By M. N. Pavlovsky. *Philosophical Library, New York*, \$3.75.
- CIRCUS, May 1950 and June 1950. *Hubbard Publications*, 1s.
- CREATIVE EVOLUTION. By H. C. Duffin. *Shaw Society*, 6d.
- DOSTOEVSKY. By E. J. Simmons. *John Lehmann*, 18s.
- EDUCATION IN THE USSR. By Y. Medynsky. *Soviet News*, 6d.
- LIFE OF CHEKHOV. By I. Nemirovsky. *Grey Walls Press*, 12s. 6d.
- LINGUIST, March 1950. *The Linguists' Club*, 1s.
- SIBERIAN FOREST ADVENTURE. By E. Boronina. *Methuen's Russian Texts*, 2s. 3d.
- SOCIALISED AGRICULTURE OF THE USSR. By N. Jasny. *Stanford University Press & Geoffrey Cumberlege*, \$7.50 or 60s.
- TOLSTOY AND CHINA. By D. Bodde. *Princeton University Press & Geoffrey Cumberlege*, \$2.50 or 16s.

The inclusion of a book in this list does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review.

CORRECTION

The quotation from A. A. Zhdanov given by H. C. Feldt on page 45 of *The Anglo-Soviet Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 1, is from the speech made at the Conference of Music Workers called by the CC of the CPSU(B) in January 1948 (not April).

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By Boris Polevoy.

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By Mikhail Bubenov.

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NON-FICTION

A People's Academy

By Gennadi Fish.

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*History of the USSR, Vol. 3—
20th Century*

Edited by Professor A. M. Pankratova.

5/-

Selected Works

By I. V. Michurin.

15/-

WHERE WAS THE CURTAIN?

THE SOVIET VISITORS to the SCR's 25th anniversary, an account of whose visit appeared in the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, Vol. X, No. 4, included men of distinction in several fields, and provided an opportunity to learn about many different aspects of Soviet cultural life, to lift the "iron curtain" that the organs of British public opinion have so often complained of. Here is an analysis of how these organs reacted to the opportunity. Every care has been taken to make the following account accurate; though there may be some omissions due to fallible press-cutting, they are unlikely to alter the general picture.

BEFORE ARRIVAL: Many papers announced that the visitors were expected. The *Star* diarist gave a 7-inch story, the *Daily Worker* 4½ inches, the *Yorkshire Evening News* 4 inches, and "briefs" (1 to 3 inches) appeared in the *Birmingham Mail*, *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, *Bristol Evening Post*, *Daily Herald*, *Eastern Evening News*, *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, *Evening News*, *Greenock Telegraph* and *Times*. The *Evening Standard* in its "Londoner's Diary" printed a 2½-inch facetious item, "Iron Curtain in Kensington" (because the SCR would not disclose the delegates' names till they were confirmed), and a longer gibe at Glushchenko.

ARRIVAL: The arrival at the airport got pictures in the *Star* and in the *Daily Herald*. The *Birmingham Gazette*, *Daily Dispatch* and *Daily Mail* ran hostile stories ("Russians Had Nothing To Say", "The Six Silent Russians," and so forth). Two of them implied that the visitors were not allowed to speak in English. The *Northern Daily Mail* gave a straight 2 inches, and the *News Chronicle* half an inch in small type.

PRESS CONFERENCE: The morning after their arrival, in response to many requests from the press, the visitors gave a press conference. This was noticed by two London evenings (*News* and *Standard*); three provincial evenings (*Wolverhampton Express & Star*, *Leicester Mercury* and *Yorkshire Evening Post*); six Sunday papers (*People*, *Reynolds*, *Chronicle*, *Dispatch*, *Express* and *Newcastle Sun*); and by the *Manchester Guardian*. A week later the *Daily Mirror* printed a jeering article, "Did Alexei Write The Lullaby?", quoting verses from an alleged Russian "atomic lullaby" and implying something discreditable in Surkov's failure to recognise it. The *Sphere* ran a pleasant photograph to illustrate an article on Britain's foreign visitors implying that Soviet visitors were elusive and practically non-existent. The *Wolverhampton Express & Star*, supported by the

Leicester Mercury, testified that "for over an hour the delegates answered questions on literature, history, biology, music and drama". The delegates might have spared their breath, for, in a total of 86 column inches in 13 newspapers on this press conference, not one reporter (or perhaps editor) found room for a single answer on any of these subjects. Three items predominated in almost every story: the visitors (a) were not sure of the name of their hotel; (b) did not think they were followed during their morning walk in the park; (c) did not know anything about the atom bomb. In one form or another these three pieces of information were given to the readers of 11 out of the 13 newspapers. Several tried to build the hotel address into a major mystery; all implied deliberate secretiveness and the enthusiastic *Sunday Dispatch* described the hotel as "almost in the shadow of the Soviet Embassy", though half a mile is rather longer than a London shadow will reach in October. The only other information given was that the visitors wanted to meet ordinary people to supplement their literary knowledge of Britain, and to see "Hamlet" and a football match. The *People* found the trip in the pouring rain to Kensington "not worth making"; the *Newcastle Sunday Sun* described the occasion as "crashing the Iron Curtain", but news of it did not crash through to the readers.

LONDON LECTURES: The only public lectures to receive notice were Professor Glushchenko's, which got 3½ inches in the *Manchester Guardian*, 9 inches in the *Daily Worker*, and a serious disapproving article by Julian Huxley in the *Spectator* (24 inches). The *Observer* printed a 4-inch gibe at Volgin and Markovsky. Kabalevsky's meeting with music critics received an appreciative 18 inches in the *Musical Express* (contradicting the *Spectator's* music critic, who thought Kabalevsky was unduly "protected" by the chairman); *Time & Tide* gave 16 inches, the *Daily Telegraph* 2½ inches. All except the *Musical Express* were condescending and gave the paper's opinions rather than Kabalevsky's. The *PEN News* gave a straight 3½ inches to Surkov's visit. The *Daily Worker* gave daily paragraphs on the lectures. This (about 80 inches) is the total press reporting of all the delegates' London lectures.

PROVINCIAL VISITS: These generally received straight treatment, occasionally marred by facetiousness. The *News Chronicle* gave ½ an inch, and the *Times* 1 inch, to the first Cambridge visit, and the *Daily Herald* 1 inch to Glushchenko's and Markovsky's visit to the Darwin Museum. Glushchenko's lecture at Cam-

bridge received 2 inches from the *News Chronicle*, 4 inches from the *Manchester Guardian*, and 8½ inches from the *Daily Telegraph*, only the last managing to find room—two whole lines—for his arguments. The *Birmingham Evening Dispatch* gave 2½ inches, and the *Birmingham Mail* 2 inches, before Kabalevsky's arrival, the *Birmingham Post* 2 inches afterwards; the *Wolverhampton Express & Star* gave 8 inches to an interview with him. The *Glasgow Bulletin & Scots Pictorial* gave a picture and 3 inches of text to Glushchenko, the *Scottish Daily Mail* 2½ inches to Kabalevsky; the *Glasgow Daily Record* had 5 inches on the visitors as "Burns enthusiasts", and *Forward* had a 2-inch advance announcement. The *Sheffield Telegraph* had an excellent record, with a preliminary 1½-inch brief, then a picture and 10½ inches of description, and a further 4 inches after the visit. (A Sheffield photograph was also reproduced in the *Municipal Journal*.) The *Bradford Telegraph & Argus* gave an advance 2 inches, 4 inches and a picture for the visit, and 8 inches for an explanation of the Mayor's absence. The *West Herts Post* gave 3½ inches to Kabalevsky's visit to Watford.

MISCELLANEOUS. The *News Chronicle* (6 inches) and the *Aberdeen Press & Journal* gave accounts of the visitors' West End trips. "Chanticleer" of the *Daily Herald* gave 6 inches to attacking the visitors for not broadcasting, 7½ inches to rebutting D. N. Pritt's rejoinder that they had not been invited by the Home Service, and 1½ inches to a final gibe. There were a number of passing references in various papers to the visitors' presence at the Empress Stadium Celebration of the October Revolution. The *Daily Worker* covered the London lectures (see above) and a number of the other appearances, and on the visitors' departure gave a full interview (a column and a half) and a 6-inch leading article.

The overall impression is of triviality and silence. Apart from the *Daily Worker* (which has a special interest in the Soviet Union) the general policy of the British press appears here to have been to conceal important news items from its readers or to reduce news columns to the level of gossip features.

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From SCR

SCR ACTIVITIES

ONE OF THE MOST encouraging signs that the Society's work does fill a need is the reception accorded to the new form of the **ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL**. Reflecting the many-sided and fundamental nature of the SCR's work, as it now does more directly, it has called forth many expressions of appreciation and a greatly increased demand for copies. The *Journal*, together with the various Section Bulletins and duplicated memoranda issued by the Society, provides at very low cost a first-hand service of translated material which is essential to those who wish to follow developments in Soviet thought. The same principle of recourse to original sources marks the activities of the various Departments and Sections recorded below, combined with the further aim of providing a reciprocal service of expert information about current British thought for Soviet inquirers.

While this thread runs right through the Society's work, a particularly interesting example is provided by the **ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING GROUP**, which arranged a discussion on May 23 at the Carpenter's Park Community Association, on recent British housing from the occupants' point of view. This was a further attempt to meet the portion of the inquiry from the VOKS Architecture Section that asked what new British housing was "widely popular", the architects' point of view having already been given at the discussion at the Architectural Association on March 23. The Group has also issued Bulletins Nos. 23 and 24 on contemporary Soviet architectural and building matters.

THE CHESS SECTION has also issued Bulletins Nos. 25 (dealing further with the Women's World Championship) and 26, 27 and 28 on the Budapest Tournament, where so many Soviet grandmasters appeared.

THE EDUCATION SECTION on March 27 discussed the principles of the Soviet educationist Anton Makarenko, after a showing of the film *The Road to Life* and in conjunction with the recently issued bulletin on Makarenko. A further bulletin which has aroused much interest is a review-summary, prepared by Mrs. Joan Simon, of the first two chapters of *Psikhologiya*, a text-book on psychology issued in 1948 by the Ministry of Education of the RSFSR. A full translation of these chapters is also available. A revised and up-to-date list of material in English on Soviet psychiatry and psychology has been prepared in conjunction with the Science

Section. Work is still continuing on the exhibition of English education being prepared for the USSR.

THE FILM SECTION held its annual general meeting on March 26, when the retiring President, Sir Ralph Richardson, and Chairman, Thorold Dickinson, were succeeded respectively by Sir Laurence Olivier and Roger Livesey. The meeting was followed by a viewing of Soviet colour cartoons. The Section hopes to announce shortly particulars of the season of films, illustrating thirty years of the Soviet cinema, which it is arranging with the London Film Club. A useful exchange of stills and books continues with the Film Section of VOKS.

A MUSIC SECTION has now been formed, and particulars of membership are available on request. It was inaugurated at a meeting on April 4, after a short recital by Kyla Greenbaum; a provisional committee was set up, which, besides planning a number of concerts for later in the year, was able after some research to make the technical arrangements for two auditions, on May 18 and June 1, of the tape-recordings of Soviet orchestral works presented by Mr. Kabalevsky on his visit last autumn. An information sub-committee has been set up to exchange information on musical activities in both countries, and a list of recent Soviet works has already been prepared.

SCIENCE SECTION: the Medical Committee had the pleasure of arranging an informal reception, on March 19, to Dr. Zakharova, who spoke shortly on the organisation of Soviet research in the bacteriological field and met medical members and friends. A visit to the Glaxo Laboratories was also arranged for Dr. Zakharova. As announced in our last issue, the English Index to Soviet Medical Periodicals has now appeared, and work is proceeding on the next volume. The Section is also working on a consolidated author index of approximately 600 titles acquired by the Translation Library since its foundation.

THEATRE SECTION: the annual general meeting was held on March 27, when Sir Lewis Casson became President in succession to Dame Edith Evans, whose retirement on account of increasing commitments was regretfully accepted by the Section. A "Moscow Art Theatre Evening" was held on May 11, before a large audience, including many students from dramatic schools. The film *The Art of the Actor*, showing the methods and

chief roles of the famous actor Tarkhanov, was given, with an English commentary by Herbert Marshall.

WRITERS' GROUP: the series of lectures on *Russian Realism* was concluded by those given on March 28 by Mrs. Eleanor Fox, with Montagu Slater in the chair and readings by George Bishop and Catherine Salkeld, and on April 25 by Eric Hartley, with the Secretary in the chair and readings by Max Brent and Morris Sweden. A Translators' Group has been set up and has begun the task of listing work in progress and exploring the demand from publishers and individuals.

EASTER COURSE: a series of events was planned for the week after Easter, in the hope that this might be a convenient time for provincial members visiting London. A viewing of *Meeting on the Elbe* was held on April 11th, by courtesy of the Soviet Embassy. On April 12 Trevor Hill spoke on *Soviet Linguistics* with the Librarian in the chair. Jack Dunman spoke on *The Agricultural Front* on April 13, with F. Le Gros Clark in the chair, and his lecture is reprinted in part in this issue. A Symposium held on April 15 was introduced by Andrew Rothstein and contained discussion statements on recent developments in Soviet historical theory, by Robert Davies; in literary

criticism, by Eric Hartley; and in the theory of art, by N. Slutsky. These were followed by a general discussion.

While the Society's recent activities have been set out, for ease of description, under a number of headings, it will be realised that they are all interdependent, and that any one public function or line of work calls for the assistance of several departments and sections. This is particularly the case with the Library, which in addition to providing a much appreciated loan and reference service for members, is called upon to assist the Society's own lecturers with material, select suitable translations for the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, and prepare information notes and material for the bulletins listed among the SCR publications. Members who are interested may have on application the recently published Annual Reports of the Education, Film and Theatre Sections, of the Writers' Group, and of the Exhibition Department, which give a fuller picture than is possible in these short notes of the manifold tasks which the SCR is called upon to fulfil.

The Society as a whole, and the Theatre Section in particular, has suffered a great loss in the death of Franklin Dyall, who gave unsparingly of his energies and talent in the cause of Anglo-Soviet understanding.

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RECENT ADDITIONS

(The prices in brackets are those for SCR members)

PSIKHOLOGIYA (Psychology). Full translation of Chapters 1 and 2 of textbook edited by Kornilov, Teplov, Smirnov, issued by the RSFSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1948. 5s. (3s. 6d.).

ANTON MAKARENKO 1888-1939. Education Section Bulletin, prepared by Beatrice King. 1s. 6d. (1s.).

IMPORTANT TASKS OF SOVIET PSYCHOLOGY. By A. N. Leontyev. From *Sov. Pedagogika*, 1949, 1. 1s. 6d. (1s.).

SOVIET PSYCHOLOGY. Review-summary by Joan Simon of Chapters 1 and 2 of *Psikhologiya* (see above). 1s. 6d. (1s.).

MAJOR SOVIET MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS, 1948-49. List edited by H. C. Feldt. 1s. 6d. (1s.).

IN PREPARATION

The following are listed as *Work in Progress* for the convenience of those who may be requiring translations of the articles mentioned; they will appear either in duplicated form or in future issues of the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*.

Notes on English Music. By D. B. Kabalevsky. From *Sovyetetskaya Musika*, 1950, 2.

Thirty Years of the Institute of the History of Material Culture. From *Izvestiya Akad. Nauk. SSSR, Ser. Ist. i Filosof.*, 1949, 3.

Conference on Written Languages of the Peoples of the USSR. From *Vestnik Akad. Nauk*, 1950, 2.

Sex Problems of Early Childhood. A chapter from *The Pre-School Age*, by E. A. Arkin, *Uchpedgiz*, 1948.

The History of the Soviet Cinema. By V. Pudovkin and E. Smirnova. From *Iskusstvo Kino*, 1949, 4.

Soviet Children's Literature. By K. Simonov. Report to the 13th Plenary Session of the Union of Soviet Writers. From *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 1950, 19.

The Legal Position of the Executive Committee of the District Soviet (organ of local government). From *Sov. Gosudarstvo i Pravo*, 1949, 11.

Principles of Teaching in the Soviet School. By M. N. Shatkin. From *Sov. Pedagogika*, 1950, 1.

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